

**INVESTIGATING ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING MECHANISMS (OLMs)
AND ELEMENTS SHAPING ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING IN SELECTED
UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA**

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DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis has been written by me and is my own work except where stated otherwise. I further declare that it has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Name: Christabel C Dakyen Date:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

OL	Organisational Learning
OLMs	Organisational Learning Mechanisms
LO	Learning Organisation
NERC	Nigerian Educational Research Council
VC	Vice-Chancellor
NCE	National Certificate of Education
ND	National Diploma
UME	University Matriculation Examination
JAMB	Joint Admission Matriculation Board
SSCE	Senior Secondary Certificate Examination
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
UCI	University College Ibadan
HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
FME	Federal Ministry of Education
ASUU	Academic Staff Union of Universities
NASU	Non-Academic Staff Union
SSANU	Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities
SUG	Student Union Government
NUC	National Universities Commission

SOPs	Specific Operating Procedures
R&D	Research and Development

ABSTRACT

This study explores the process of organisational learning in selected universities in Nigeria. OL is essential in an organisation's ability to survive, grow, adapt and respond to environmental dynamics and changes. Universities as institutions of learning play significant roles in shaping societies. They develop minds and human capital, create and disseminate knowledge relevant for use by other organisations. In consideration of their contributions and relevance, researchers suggest the need to develop an understanding of how universities learn as organisations, especially in a complex environment. To this end, three research objectives have been raised to investigate organisational learning in three universities in Nigeria. The first objective examines the levels of learning in organisations in attempt to establish what makes learning "organisational". The second objective is to identify organisational mechanisms facilitating the OL in selected universities in Nigeria. And, finally, to investigate the environmental and organisational elements shaping OL in selected universities in Nigeria.

The study employs Huber's cognitive and behavioural theory as the lens for investigating OLMs and elements shaping OL in case universities. Research participants from case universities have been categorized into four arms (key players, academics, non-academics and students), which serves as a form of triangulation, in addition to method triangulation based on interviews, direct observation and documents. Data analysis has been centered on the identification and examination of organisational learning mechanisms (OLMs) and elements shaping organisational learning (OL).

The results show that organisational learning mechanisms are defined beyond structures and procedures to include "resources" in case universities; and the implementation of these OLMs facilitate learning. Findings further reveal that although these mechanisms are natural and established, they are never systematic in implementation due to surrounding elements within and outside the universities, which shapes the process and the learning in universities. These elements stem from regulative, normative, cultural, organisational and contextual facets of the universities.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, organisational learning has been considered more of a need than a want. This is because the ability of organisations to learn in the continuous dynamic and complex environment enables organisations adapt, improve, survive and offer organisational advantages. Smith (2001) argues that organisations learn quite naturally whether they choose to or not, with the learning being viewed as a process ingrained in the organisation. However, the mechanisms and elements that facilitate and define this process have received relatively little attention. Rather much emphasis in the field has been placed on the individual, group and organisational levels as units of analysis with little development towards understanding how individual learning becomes organisational and also what elements are capable of fostering or impeding the process. Popper and Lipshitz (1998); Lipshitz et al (2007); Schechter and Feldman (2011) proposed that organisational learning require ways to facilitate information acquisition, dissemination, interpretation and use within organisations. To this end, they advocated the use of OLMs as the structural and procedural arrangements enabling organisations process information relevant for their functioning. And it is also through the use of OLMs that individual learning becomes the property of the organisation and the issue of anthropomorphism becomes minimised. Though studies acknowledge this contribution, authors like (Barette et al 2012; Prugsamatz 2010) recommend the need for elements, which are found within and outside the organisation that either foster or inhibit (shaping) the operations of OLMs and the learning in organisations; as this aims to provide a comprehensive view towards understanding OL. Despite these contributions and recommendations, little empirical studies have been established with regards OLMs and elements shaping OL, especially in universities. Therefore, it is especially important to understand how learning in organizations occurs by looking at these limitations.

This study explores the process of organisational learning by investigating mechanisms facilitating OL and the elements that either foster or inhibit the process of learning in selected universities in Nigeria. The chapter begins by discussing the shortcoming found in the current OL literature, with the intention of demonstrating the need for empirical

studies in OL in universities in Nigeria. Next the chapter establishes the research questions and objectives, primarily focusing on bridging the gaps identified within the literature. Furthermore, the research contributions are presented and the chapter concludes by highlighting the structure of the thesis.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1.1 The Need for Research and Theoretical Perspective

Organisational learning can be understood as the acquisition and use of information, as a powerful means of achieving competitive edge, as the detection and correction of error, as a means of adaptation and as the improvement of organisational performance (Arshad et al 2016; Breda-Verduijn and Heijboer 2016; Buheji et al 2014; Mahler 2009; Oliver 2009; Skerlavaj and Dimovski 2009). Academics and organisational practitioners acknowledge the relevance of organisational learning, and consider it a necessary requirement for organisational growth and survival in the ever-changing environment. According to Smith (2012), the more complex, dynamic and threatening an organisation's environment, the more organisational learning is considered necessary for organisational sustainability. While to Raduan et al (2009: 55), the relevance of organisational learning in the twenty first century cannot be over emphasised because *"organisational learning is more of a need than a choice at the present time. It is almost impossible to notice organisations that will admit to ignoring learning, since this would be akin to be accepting the start of its demise"*. The ability of organisations to learn and keep abreast with their environment not only enables them adapt to and manage external forces and tackle strategic issues, but it also provides them an edge over other organisations (Nzuve and Omolo, 2012). Considering the increasing pressures from stakeholders, private and public organisations, universities like other organisations are expected to learn in order to adapt and survive in the competitive environment (Lynch 2014; Meyer 2002). Universities according to Goddard (2000) and Ross (1973) can become key assets and powerhouse for economic development through their enormous contributions in knowledge creation, dissemination and the understanding of the world; therefore, universities are in need of constant learning and updating than any other organisation. Similarly, Akhtar et al (2011) argued that universities contribute to the development and ratings of a lot of countries; and their ability to learn as organisations is a boost to the organisation and the economy as well. Furthermore, Hodgkinson

(2010) commends that organisational learning is considered a key strategy and as the strategic direction for universities. In this light, the former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in a speech explained that organisational learning in universities in Africa could be used as institutional edge and responsiveness to demands, bringing about institutional and human development, alongside quality in output:

"The university must become a primary tool for Africa's development in the new century. Universities can help develop African expertise; they can enhance the analysis of African problems; strengthen domestic institutions; serve as a model environment for the practice of good governance, conflict resolution and respect for human rights, and enable African academics to play an active part in the global community of scholars" (Bloom et al, 2006:2).

Considering the relevance of learning in organisations, majority of studies on organisational learning have concentrated on developed countries. It is true that studies on organisational learning have been conducted in the developing country context (e.g Jamali and Sidani 2008; Kamya et al 2011; Vargas 2011), but still more needs to be explored in developing countries in Africa (Baoteng 2011; Ejim-Eze 2013; Oisamoje and Idubor 2013) and a considerable gap in terms of knowledge about learning at organisational level in developing countries exist. Consequently, there is need for efforts to focus on organisational learning in developing countries to obtain deeper understanding of the subject matter. Further research into organisational learning in developing countries has been urged by scholars on the grounds that studies on developed nations do not provide intellectual foundations for understanding organisational learning in developing countries. According to Easterby-Smith (1997; 2009), most of the research on organisational learning has had limited focus on developing countries. Irrespective of disciplinary interest, Easterby-Smith proposed that international perspective of organisational learning should be a priority for the future. In support of Hawkins (1994) recommendation for further research on organisational learning, Easterby-Smith (1997:1109) and Easterby-Smith et al (2009:s7) also pleaded for more attempts to investigating organisational learning in developing nations not as *"another managerial lever that can be pulled by senior executives at their behest, but as a normal, if problematic, process in every organisation involving reciprocal exchanges between individuals, groups, and other organisational*

entities". Additionally, the need for research on organisational learning in developing countries is justified by Kim (1999) as essential because investigating organisational learning in such contexts will aid in understanding the dynamic process of capability building in developing countries and also to extend existing theories from developed countries. While with reference to organisational learning in universities, Rusch (2005: 115) stresses the need for better understanding of how universities learn, as *"collective learning is not just the sum of individual learning"*.

Research on organisational learning in universities is scanty compared to those of business and industrial organisations. Universities are today's central engine for social and economic growth through their roles in education, business research and the forming of minds able to participate in the creation and discovery of knowledge in all aspects of the society (Meyer, 2002:539), and if learning is to flourish in universities, it is critical that the concept, the mechanisms that seek to encourage learning be better understood (Patnaik et al 2013: 159). Similarly, Singh and Little (2011) posit that the idea of organisational learning should be of great interest to universities as agents of societal change and institutions that are responsible for the production and transfer of innovative and applicable knowledge to industries and businesses; therefore it is relevant to enhance the knowledge base and appreciate the experience of universities practicing OL.

In addition to the lack of empirical studies in developing countries and universities, the existence of limited studies on OLMs also justifies the need for further studies as presented by Kar- Unluoglu and Easterby-Smith (2011: 4) that, while the contribution of Popper and Lipshitz has aroused significant interest in organisational research, only few publications on OLMs are attained, proposing that the concept of OLM calls for the design and implementation of more specific OLMs because *"the concept of OLM is instrumental for exploring learning strategies developed and adopted by organisations since it allows the study of organisational learning as an actual phenomenon by focusing on existing mechanisms"*. Similarly, Lines (2005: 171) proposed for more studies on learning mechanisms which could shed more light on the process to learning in organisations. Additionally, Cirella et al (2016:8) propose future studies should focus on other types of organisations in terms of size or countries in investigating OLMs and the roles in learning. Popper and Lipshitz (1998; 2000; 2005) contribution of OLMs as an

attempt to address the issue of anthropomorphism in organisational learning, explain how individual learning becomes organisational. They present that individuals learn through their nervous systems but for organisations to learn, they must use observable systems and structures known as “organisational learning mechanisms” that relate individual learning to what becomes organisational learning. In agreement, Oliver (2009:548) argues *“it is due to the existence of such mechanisms that organisational learning can be studied as an actual phenomenon”*, and OLMs enable the sharing and analysis of individual learning and experiences with and by other organisational members, thereby making the learning and experience the property of the organisation through distribution of lessons learnt to organisational units for use (Oliver, 2009). Similarly, Carroll et al (2004) identified that mechanisms enable organisations move from a low-level capacity to that of a higher-level during learning by understanding major, systemic causes and providing a range of action possibilities to address such causes. The use of learning mechanisms enables inquiry, facilitates great insights and challenges assumptions. These mechanisms are unique to organisations and their learning process. Arguing on this point, Boyce (2003) states that universities like other organisations have unique mechanisms they employ in learning as organisations; thus the emphases on the need to investigate these learning mechanisms.

Researchers argue that as much as studies on organisational learning mechanisms provide insight and understanding on how individual learning becomes organisational learning (the process), how organisations improve and perform through learning (outcomes), more studies are recommended on the dynamics/elements shaping (inhibitors and enablers) organisational learning (Popper and Lipshitz, 2000). To this end, Coggshall (2004:13) asserts, although organisational theories provide a great deal of insight into how organisation may or may not improve through learning; the theories fail to address the environmental and organisational forces (elements) on the process. Prugsamatz (2010:263) recommends further research into elements shaping organisational learning. While, Rashman et al (2009:486) argue that sector-specific features within service organisations are likely to influence organisational learning process, and further research is required to understand these contingencies which shape the nature of organisational learning in such organisations. Additionally, Lines

(2005:172) encourages more studies on the dynamics of learning in the workplace, and how organisational structures and processes enhance or limit organisational learning.

However, whilst various aspects influencing organisational learning have been identified by different scholars, Nathai-Balkissoon and Pun (2010) argue that a considerable gap in the OL literature persists. Particularly, there is a need for a theory that provides a holistic approach to OL as existing theories only consider the effect of one or two factors that affect this process, and as emphasized by Bapuji and Crossan (2004:411) that *“various factors within and outside the organisation facilitate or inhibit organisational learning. Researchers have addressed the role of organisational factors such as support, trust, safety, accountability and culture. Similarly, the role of environmental factors such as competition and position in the industry has been addressed. However a comprehensive model of the internal and external factors that influence OL is not yet available”*. They further recommended, *“it is necessary to revisit some of the organisational theories by incorporating the assumptions that firms learn and that they learn heterogeneously, such revisiting will open an interesting avenue for future research to explore the intersections of organisational learning and organisational theory”* (412). In consideration of the above, this research defines the elements shaping learning according to Meyer and Rowan (1977), Zucker (1987), DiMaggio and Powell (1991), Scott (1995:2013) and Zuber (2002:2012) as “elements” that exist within the organisation and external to the organisation exerting varying control on the learning in organisations. As argued by DiBella (2001), it is illusory to think that elements shaping learning are universal, rather it is essential to take into account the differences between organisations in terms of their limitations, constraints and other circumstances (Barette et al 2012:140).

This study therefore focuses on organisational learning mechanisms and the elements shaping organisational learning. This is because empirical and theoretical limitations point to the need for further research in these areas and given the accompanying need for more research within developing countries, this study is conducted in selected universities in Nigeria.

1.2 RESEARCH AIM, OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

Research Aim and Objectives

The general aim of this research is to bridge the gap in the literature and extend existing organisational learning theories to a developing nation context. While its specific aim is to investigate the nature of organisational learning in selected universities in Nigeria. This will be achieved through the literature review and empirical study, with the following objectives:

- To investigate the levels of learning in organisations and the link between levels in order to establish what makes learning “organisational”.
- To identify organisational mechanisms that facilitate organisational learning in selected universities in Nigeria.
- To examine the environmental and organisational elements shaping organisational learning in selected universities in Nigeria.

Research Questions

In fulfilling the above objectives, the following research questions are formulated:

- What are the levels of organisational learning?
- How does individual learning become organisational learning?
- How do selected universities in Nigeria facilitate organisational learning?
- What are the environmental and organisational elements shaping organisational learning in selected universities in Nigeria?

The empirical limitations justify the need for further research on OLMs and elements shaping organisational learning within the Nigerian context, and selected universities are chosen for this investigation. Several reasons arise as to why universities constitute the research context. Universities in any country form a core part of its economic infrastructure through their numerous contributions such as the provision of higher-level skills, employment generation, ground-breaking research, economic growth development, investment, knowledge formation and management. In developed countries like UK, universities and other HE organisations contribute about 2.8% to their GDP, and have generated over £73 billions of output (Snowden, 2014). Secondly, majority of research on organisational learning in developed and developing nations are

undertaken within private and profit making organisations with little reference to service organisations like universities. Therefore, the need for the study as argued by Rashman et al (2009) that universities like other service organisations constitute an important, distinctive context for the study of OL because of their unique features and they remain under-represented in literature on OL. Additionally, Patnaik et al (2013) stressed that research on organisational learning in universities is scanty compared to those of business organisations. While to Albrecht et al (2007) understanding organisational learning in universities is important as universities are institutions responsible for learning, educating people, creating and disseminating knowledge, and learning should be their focal point.

Beside the relevant contributions of universities to most economies, universities in Nigeria have been chosen for investigating OL because of the following reasons: Firstly, Nigeria has one of the most diverse university system, comprising of Federal, State and Private (religious and private investors) universities in West African (Adewole, 2014). Secondly, universities in Nigeria have witnessed massive changes and interference from both within and outside the system (chapter two) stemming from increase in the number of programmes offered in these institutions (have grown by 89% since 2002), increasing number of students, insufficient resources, politics, change in policies and governance, (Akinyemi and Bassey, 2012). In spite of these issues, universities in Nigeria are not relenting in their pursuit to learn and expand in possible ways to accommodate these transformations. Universities are considered fundamental machineries to the construction of a knowledge economy and society in all nations (Saint et al., 2003), and knowledge is the most important asset for economic development in the 21st century. As knowledge becomes more important, so do universities; and the quality of any university tends to be measured by its ability to learn, change and keep abreast with demands as its availability to the wider economy is becoming increasingly critical to national competitiveness (Kanji et al 1999). Another reason why universities in Nigeria are appropriate for the study is that there is a considerable shortfall in knowledge concerning organisational learning in universities in developing nations and especially in Nigeria (Table 3.5), therefore the contribution of this study to organisational learning literature is considered to be potentially significant.

1.3 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STUDY

This research provides the opportunity to advance existing knowledge and theories, providing information and data on the uniqueness of organisational learning in Nigerian universities and making appropriate recommendation. This study intends to contribute to existing knowledge by providing an in-depth understanding of organisational learning in selected universities in Nigeria. Overall, this study differs from previous studies in the following aspects:

1. In general, through theoretical and empirical analyses undertaken in this study, the research aims to contribute to the limited body of knowledge on OLMs and elements shaping organisational learning.
2. The study will provide empirical evidence of OLMs and the environmental and organisational elements shaping organisational learning, with an understanding of how and why:
 - These mechanisms facilitate organisational learning and,
 - These elements shape (enables and hinders) organisational learning.
3. The study will provide information on the Nigerian Higher Education Sector (Universities) with emphasis on learning.
4. This study examines the nature of organisational learning in selected universities in Nigeria. Hence, it contributes to theory by creating a path for understanding the mechanisms and elements that enable and define the learning in universities as organisations beyond individual level within a developing country context.
5. This study also intends to make appropriate recommendations for universities in Nigeria and their regulators.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF RESEARCH

This thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter introduces the area of the study, the need for this study, the research objectives, research questions, and provides a justification for the choices made. Additionally, the expected contributions of the research are presented.

Chapter Two: Contextual Background

This chapter shows a review of the Higher Education sector in general (definition and features) before narrowing to the Nigerian context (History, classification, types, and structure and external players). Furthermore, the challenges for universities are introduced.

Chapter Three: Organisational Learning

This chapter covers a comprehensive literature on organisational learning. It captures the arguments on subject matter, the conceptualization; individual cycles leading to the understanding of organisational learning processes. Organisational learning mechanisms, elements shaping organisational learning, organisational learning in universities and the Nigerian context; and the conceptual framework of this study are further discussed. This review resulted in establishing research questions investigated.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

This chapter discusses the research Methodology applied in this study. This includes the research philosophy, approach, strategy, data collection methods and method of analysis with justification for application. Also, research tactics and strategies for research trustworthiness (validity and reliability) have been considered and how it is reflected in the research.

Chapters Five and Six: Findings, Analysis and Discussion

Chapters five and six present data collected and findings accruing from the three case study organisations with the use of selected collection methods. Data are analyzed using Content/thematic analysis with the inclusion of quotes for data presentation. These chapters also show the discussion of findings. The results are linked to literature to investigate arising similarities or differences in order to establish the contribution and fill the gap.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions, Contributions and Recommendations

The chapter presents the conclusions and shows how the aim and objectives of the research have been fulfilled. Additionally, the limitations, contributions of the study to knowledge are discussed. Finally, recommendations are made for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH CONTEXT

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the country (Nigeria) and case context (universities) of the study in attempt to draw forth the history of universities in Nigeria as it relates to their unique learning process. Following the establishment of Nigerian universities on Western structure, these universities continue to experience changes in structures and policies driven by different Government regimes which in turn shape their learning process. This chapter begins by introducing the broad definition and aim of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). In this section, the Nigerian educational system is presented capturing each system's learning process and utilised learning mechanisms. The Nigerian educational system is divided into the traditional, qur'anic and western systems. The western educational system however led to the establishment of recognised universities in Nigeria following the recommendations of two commissions- Asquith and Elliot commission of 1943 and Ashby commission of 1959. Universities in Nigeria are classified based on their generations, which are defined by their period of establishment and governance structure (public or private) and that impacts on their learning as organizations. Based on these classifications, the overview and the organizational structure of Case universities are discussed as this reflects how learning occurs (information processing) across the academic, administrative and student levels.

In the second section, HEIs policies are discussed and how this shapes learning in universities in Nigeria. Being that Government is responsible for the funding and control of public universities in Nigeria, learning in these institutions is highly controlled and managed by the Government and its parastatals. The role of Government parastatals in the operation of universities in Nigeria is also captured as they serve as the machineries that implement policies and oversee the operations of universities in Nigeria including their learning. These parastatals include FME, NUC and JAMB.

This last section covers the role of trade unions in the learning of universities as they are in constant conflict with the Government over the issues of managing the affairs of

the universities properly and the influence of Government in their learning. This chapter is then concluded with the challenges of universities in Nigeria, which tends to impact their operations as well as their learning. Common among these challenges include funding, institutional autonomy and the growing population.

2.1 HIGHER EDUCATION

Education according to Adewuyi and Okemakinde (2013:121) is *“the process of socialization by which men and women learn to adapt to, and where necessary, conquer their environment”*. The socialization process enables learners behave in a way considered acceptable to the society. This process also results in the development of an individual’s cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains for efficient acquisition and use of knowledge and skills necessary to survive and make progress in the environment. While higher education was defined during a world declaration summit on higher education as all post-secondary education, training and research guidance at educational systems such as universities that are authorised to operate as organisations of higher education by regulatory authorities. This includes all the activities defined by a country as higher education- not just those taking place within ordinary universities and graduate schools, but shorter-term education and trainings in other educational settings (polytechnics and technical schools) within a two to three years’ duration (World Bank, 1998). Similarly, Baum et al (2013) described higher education as the involvement in occupational and other developmental studies in other educational settings that can result in a degree or certificate, beside the university. To King (2011) Higher Education is qualified with the following features: a) a predominantly social structure rather than a material phenomenon that is characterised by knowledge acquisition and distribution, and b) as training and providing for different identities and interests.

Considering Higher Education Institutions, O’Banion and Wilson (2010) noted that they exist to create, absorb, build and disseminate knowledge through teaching and learning, aid in the industrialization of the economy, contribute towards the improvement and development of cognitive and communicative skills in individuals and groups alike (such as the ability to be critical in thinking and the capacity to challenge the status quo). Adewuyi and Okemakinde (2013:122) identified the functions of higher education institutions as:

- Contributing to national development through high-level relevant manpower training.
- The development and inculcation of proper values for the survival of the individual and society.
- The development of intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments.
- The acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society.
- The promotion of scholarship and community services.
- The forging and cementation of national unity, and,
- The promotion of national and international understanding and interaction.

These functions constitute the primary purpose of HEIs, but this tends to differ across different country context. It is arguable to present that HEIs are operated in different countries uniquely; some of which may serve their society well while others may not. Bloom et al (2006) argued that the significant differences in countries characteristics (like education policies, poverty level and the level of response to globalization) influences how HEIs may positively impact the economy as well as how these institutions face changes and learn. HEIs in Nigeria will therefore be considered in relation to the country's characteristics and influence to learn.

2.2 COUNTRY CONTEXT: NIGERIA

Nigeria is an African country on the Gulf of Guinea with an estimated population of 181.6million people, consisting of thirty-six States with Abuja as the capital city. The federation of Nigeria is classified into three unequal regions- northern, western and eastern/southern regions. Each State is made up of unique culture, language and different religious strand (Christianity, Islam and Indigenous) having some dominant in some parts, but English is the unifying language. The Federal Government heads the central affairs of the country, while State Governments control individual state operations. Additionally, every State has its own Local Government system depending on the number of Local Governments found in the State (CIA, 2016). The Federal and State Governments are the sole proprietors of public HEIs in Nigeria and are responsible for their functioning as it applies.

2.2.1 EVOLUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Nigeria has one of the oldest, biggest and most comprehensive systems of higher education in Africa. The system has undergone a considerable amount of growth, reform and diversification which impacts on the learning in universities (Adewole, 2014). Before the colonization by Britain, Nigeria had two forms of higher education system: indigenous and Qur'anic education. Western (English) education was introduced by the colonial masters.

PRE-COLONIAL ERA

The Indigenous/ Traditional system of Education

The traditional system of education is described as the type of education that existed as part of the culture of different people during pre-colonialism in Nigeria. Variations between and among distinct social, religions and groups were found, but were only in matters of details and it was therefore described as a system of education that cuts across various social groups in Nigeria before the adoption of the current western educational system. Indigenous societies in Nigeria consisted of member with similar values, customs and beliefs binding them together. This bond fostered collective behaviour among members of same social communities (Jekayinfa, 2008), this is also evident in the culture of communal relationship found in universities which enables the process of learning in the organisations. Traditional education stems from the overall system of thought, tradition and philosophy of the people. The communal way of life emphasised the training of young members towards participation in the community life of the people. Training of community members was based on collective identity, members were brought up together in the extended family compound, under the watchful eyes of the elderly, and they addressed themselves as siblings or relatives. They were further oriented to be loyal and acquainted with communal norms, beliefs, customs, values and traditions which were cherished and practiced with the aim of developing/breeding good character and responsibility for living, respect and kindness for ancestors and elders of the community (Nwauwa, 1997: xiii). To Okoli and Allahna (2014:253) this *“education grows out of the environment and the learning process is directly related to the pattern of work in the society. Although most aspect of the indigenous education is informal, yet it met the need of the then society”*. The content of traditional education was dictated by the environmental and geographical factors of the

given societies. For instance, people living/dwelling in coastal regions learnt how to swim, paddle the canoe and had the understanding of the dynamics (inhabitants, survival and living) of the creeks. While inhabitants of the savannah region learnt about animal husbandry and how to adapt to the intricate eco-system (Mgbor and Adodo, 2013).

Traditional education began from individual homes and extended to neighbourhood and community education. Home education consisted members of a family with the parents as instructors and this was comparable to primary education of the western education system that was later experienced. The neighbourhood education was the secondary school which involved the interaction and training between and among other members of the neighbourhood. While the community education was offered by members of the community who were privileged to obtain education from other secret societies external to theirs and were designated for that purpose. This form of education was considered as higher education. The learning process of community education included the acquisition of numeric skill through counting and complex mathematical operations. Communication and interaction were achieved through learning different situated languages, proverbs, tongue twisters and riddles as a sign of good breeding (Mkpa, 2014). Wrestling, games and acrobatic displays were different forms of physical training undertaken to tackle physical weakness and enable members become fitter. Knowledge of communities' lineage, heritage, triumphs, conquests and failures were stored in the memories of elders who passed it across through story-telling, tales and festive gatherings, and were separated from the creative folklores and other literary knowledge obtained from school. The avenues for traditional education were homes, market places, farm, river, shrines, workshops, community festivals and meetings and interactions (Omolewa, 2007). A typical example of this can be found in the Yoruba tradition education whose standard measure was the presentation of what they call "Omoluwabi", who according to Babarinde (2012:4) *"designated these Yoruba whose good character was the traditional model for community. Its acquisition entailed, as in any process of education, the pursuit of knowledge and of livelihood familiar with colonial objective, but clearly went much farther. Diligence in keeping custom, civility in public and private affairs, versatility of skills and interest, maturity of judgement: these were*

hallmarks of a practical, constantly tested intelligence and an emergent manifested in Omoluwabi”.

Aside the unique features and strengths of the traditional education, it was severally criticised for being inflexible, age alone constituted the criterion for wisdom and truth, that is the older the wiser. Traditional education was considered timeless and wasteful and failed to encourage the spirit of enquiry but rather dwelt in fear and superstition; it was limited for being segregatory between gender and for being non-literate (Jekayinfa, 2008). In spite the numerous criticisms, the reality of traditional education in Nigeria cannot be denied, in this light Babarinde (2012:5) contributes *“all education must be regarded as socialization in so far as it involves initiation into the public traditions which are articulated in language and forms of thought”*. The major concern remains, are there lessons in the operations, principles and content of traditional education that drives the behaviour of members in the society and how learning occurs in universities in Nigeria?

The Islamic/ Qur’anic system of education

The Qur’anic system of education was indigenous to a number of communities in the Northern region of Nigeria. Believers of Islam took it not just as a religion but a complete way of life; they had injunction pertaining worship and prayers, mode of dressing, food and drinks, public etiquette, training and other facets of living (Oladosu, 2013). Islam came with its unique form of education and was dispensed in schools known as Makaranta with some outstanding features; entry and withdrawal from such schools were not bound by age-all religious members were granted equal access not constrained by age; no school fee was charged and the Qur’anic instructors known as Mallam relied on gifts and other charitable sources of livelihood; training and learning was not based on competition rather individuals progressed on personal levels and also there was no need for formal examination before graduation. Students had access to different instructors and not restricted to a particular instructor. The course content of education was based on the Qur’an or the traditions of the Islam prophet, law, songs of praise and Islamic literature (Mkpa, 2014). This educational system accommodated more males than females since the religion does not permit the indiscriminate intermingle between the male and female and every woman was expected to be respectable, reputable and responsible. The learning mechanism was mainly through recitation and memorization through drill and constant use of whip. The form of Islamic

education practised in Nigeria had been frowned at for the inability to meet the standard of Islamic education found in countries such as Syria (in Damascus), Kufa (Iraq), Cairo, Baghdad, Turkey, and Mecca (Saudi Arabia). Islamic education in those countries was placed on philosophy, astronomy, calligraphy, mathematics and other science courses like medicine and technology (Babarinde, 2012).

The Islamic education was adopted in Nigeria because it was believed to contribute positively to learning in different aspects. Scholars like al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Rushd and al-Ghazālī revived the pursuit for science when Europe was trapped in dark ages; these scholars presented great philosophies and knowledge (Oladosu, 2013:118); established one of the oldest and prestigious university in the world (Al-Azhar in Cairo); contributed to the liberation of scientific research, introduced Arabic numerals, decimal notations and digitization; originated algebras, geometry, trigonometry and other inventions (Akinsanya, 2012). The adoption of Islamic education in the Northern region of Nigeria was unable to match western education that was later introduced. Initially, western education was opposed in this region because it was linked to Christianity and colonialism, but when it was later accepted it was restricted to members of the royal class and other non-Islamic areas (McIntyre, 1982). Educational imbalance and disparity between the North and South regions of Nigeria and the accompanying differences in sharing of privileges, opportunities and posts were the consequences of partial participation in western education in the North. Another major political-economic effect was the politicization of higher education where controversial educational policies such as the discriminatory admission, quota system, changes in school calendar, nomadic education, and establishment of educational institutions for political balancing became the order of the day. These has done more harm than good to the educational system of Nigeria as high level of school dropout, discrimination against the girl-child, inadequate facilities, unqualified instructors and the general questioning of relevance are experienced (Ajidagba, 1998:92).

COLONIAL ERA

Western System of Education

The first beneficiaries of western education in Nigeria were slaves and their children who were exposed to this form of education abroad and those later educated back in

Nigeria: this reveals the long history of western education in Nigeria. The first recorded effort of western education was some form of learning institutions in 1515 in the Oba of Benin's palace, while other open attempts occurred through the Methodist missionary society, church missionary society and the Methodist mission in 1842 and 1843 (Mkpa, 2014). The curriculum of western education consisted mainly of reading, writing, arithmetic and religious knowledge, commonly referred to as the 4Rs. This was to enable communication between recipients with their masters in Government and in church in order to be able to read and study the bible and run other errands (Mgbor and Adodo, 2013). Till date, most features of the western education are replicated in the learning systems of universities in Nigeria which tends to shape their process of learning. For instance, though traditional symbols, languages and culture are taking into consideration during the processing of information in universities because it is deep-rooted in the activities/actions of organisational members, information is exchanged and analysed in English.

As earlier noted, the avenue for traditional education was the home, with the overall purpose of preparing community members to participate in the building of their society and the development of acceptable character. The western education on the other hand, deliberately set against the indigenous culture, beliefs and traditions. Traditional culture and religion which were the platform for character training were discouraged in schools because they were regarded as uncivilised ways of learning (Fajana, 1972:323). In pursuit of individuality by the Anglo-American culture, collective identity-the sense of community belonging- was set aside by the reign of western education. The content of education became foreign, specifically foreign history, culture and geography were taught. Indigenous languages (vehicle for culture transmission) were prohibited in schools with punishments for non-adherence such as fines (Ajidagba, 1998). In terms of administration, western education was not an extension of home education, rather it was moved away from homes and communities and established far away and students were usually camped and catered for in schools; this enabled the learning of foreign customs and ways of life without the interference of the local community (Sulaiman, 2012). Without doubt, western education has blessed the country but it depersonalised indigenous values and raised the fundamental question of relevance which is still the battle Nigeria is facing, *"to have dropped the indigenous language of a people is educationally unsound and is tantamount to disintegrating and destroying the group as a*

unit, to preserve the language is to preserve the people that speak them and to strengthen the moral sanctions that rest in community membership” (Fajan, 1972:324).

Table 2.1 The impact of evolution of HEIs on Learning

	Traditional Education	Qur’anic Education	Western Education
The learning process	Acquisition of numeric skill through counting and complex operations	Learning was based on individual training and development	Acquisition and use of knowledge for communication and interaction with masters through the 4Rs-reading, writing, religious knowledge and arithmetic
Mechanisms utilised	Homes, market places, farm, river, shrines, workshop, community festivals and meetings and interactions.	Recitation and memorisation, through drill and constant use of whip	Camps and classrooms
Elements shaping the learning process	Communal norms, belief, values and traditions, inhabitation conditions	Normative- based on the contribution of this system to other countries. Religion	The desire to adopt foreign culture by colonial masters.

2.2.2 HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

2.2.2.1 The Establishment of Universities in Nigeria

The idea, establishment and development of higher education institutions in Nigeria from colonial era to independence in 1960 are traced to the contributions of commissions such as the Asquith and Elliot Commission (1943) and Ashby commission (1959).

Colonial Era Commission

The Asquith and Elliot commission of 1943 laid the foundation for the establishment of universities during colonial rule. The commission was given the mandate and responsibility of establishing educational institutions for the promotion of higher education, learning, research and the development of HEIs in the colonies; and to explore means by which HEIs in the United Kingdom may be able to partner with

Nigerian HEIs (Lulat, 2005: 227). They recognised the need for intellectual human growth, manpower development and self-actualization through learning. Before the formation of the commission, Yaba Higher College was the highest education institution in Nigeria providing programs of HEI standard. The college lacked in-depth specialization, especially theoretically and was not adequate for higher education standards according to the colonial masters. In confronting the limitation in the structure, methodology and process of learning in Yaba College, Asquith and Elliot Commission was set up (Isichei, 2013). Asquith and Elliot report led to the establishment of the first university in Nigeria-University College Ibadan (UCI) in 1948 currently referred to as University of Ibadan, an affiliate of the University of London. UCI was saddled with several challenges at inception ranging from rigid constitutional requirements, inadequate staff and low level of enrolment (Ajayi and Ekundayo, 2008).

Independence Era Commission

The Ashby report whether in faithfulness to or in criticism of its recommendation has been accepted as “Nigeria’s education Bible” because Nigerian educational development since independence in 1960 has been conditioned based on the commission’s contributions (Asiwaju, 1972: 2). Ashby commission was initially referred to as the commission on post-school certificate and higher education in Nigeria, appointed by the Federal Minister of Education in 1959, with the aim of investigating into Higher Education needs of Nigeria over the subsequent years -twenty years (Anyanwu, 2010). The commission submitted its report in September 1960, compiled by a nine member body-comprising of three Americans, three British and three Nigerians. Eight members of the commission were grounded educational scholars who had long-termed and outstanding experiences in higher education planning in their countries, while the exception was a former Federal minister of Education- responsible for managing the educational affairs of Nigeria (Rosenfield, 2014). In investigating into Higher Education needs, the services of American and British experts were secured by the commission in the preparation of educational documents for its consideration. Two of these papers were significant to the commission: the 1960’s paper on high-level manpower needs of Nigeria by Professor F. Harbison of Princeton University; and the 1970’s Paper on staff training was presented by Mr V. Griffith of Oxford University. The operation of the commission was funded (financed) by the Carnegie Corporation (established by Andrew

Carnegie in 1911 to promote the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding. It has helped to establish and endow variety of institutions) (Oni, 1997:2012).

The composition of the commission was exclusively made of members whose experiences were limited largely to the Anglo-American educational system. Thus massive conclusions and recommendations were conceived rather narrowly within, and with much bias for the Anglo-American experience and resources. The appointment of the commission was driven by the desire to modernise Nigeria, especially in the area of education; however Nicols (1961:374) argued that the formulation of such plan could have benefitted more from the experiences of countries such as China, Japan and the Soviet Union than the western countries in the present century because of their high level of expertise. The Ashby commission was also criticised for being preoccupied with the emergence of a western-oriented elite of highly qualified servicemen capable of sustaining the politico-economic framework already in place by the colonial masters-Britain. The provision of education for the masses, designed to boost economic productivity and development, which has evolved in certain developed western countries, was of little interest to the Ashby commission and the incumbent Nigeria Government of the time (Okoli and Allahna, 2014). Ashby rather placed more emphasis on the need for Nigeria to continue to cling to Britain and America for educational guidance and assistance.

Investment in education according to Ashby commission was centred on the vision of Nigeria in 1970 as: *“a nation of some fifty million people, with industries, oil and well developed agriculture; intimately associated with other free African countries... a voice to be listened to [in the world]; with its traditions in art preserved and fostered and with the beginnings of its own literature, a nation which in taking its place in the technological civilisation...”* (Nigeria, 1960:3 in Asiwaju, 1972:4). For Nigeria to fit into this envisioned situation, plans were made towards achieving the needs of Higher Education from 1960-1970; the commission forecasted above 80,000 citizens with higher education by 1970, out of which 37.5% were estimated to be needed in the education profession and administration. To meet this target, Nigeria would require a yearly flow of 2000 graduates from higher education institutions; consisting of citizens/individuals trained both in the tradition of more familiar liberal arts and social sciences; and those of agriculture, the physical and biological sciences, engineering, medicine and law (Oni,

2012). Most Nigerians emphasised the need to link these studies to local needs. The Nigerian teaching content was enlarged by research and Ashby report stressed the training of future graduates. The training of high-level manpower was programmed by Ashby to take place in Nigeria but it permitted the practice of sending Nigerians abroad to be trained, and the inflow of expatriate personnel into Nigeria as another means of training. This training need ushered in the creation of universities in Nigeria (Asiwaju, 1972). Sir Eric Ashby, in his report, also noted the limited capacity of trained teachers in secondary schools despite the increase in demand of their services, and recommended the establishment of higher education institutions for undergraduate degrees in Education and teacher training for secondary schools in Nigeria. The cost of teachers training was borne by the regions, as recommended by the report. To train more teachers, several training institutions like the colleges of education were established by different regions (Jekayinfa, 2000; Sunday, 2012).

The implementation of the Ashby report further led to the establishment of other universities: the university of Ife presently referred to as Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife established by the authorities of the western region; Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria by the northern region and the University of Lagos by the Federal government all in 1962. By that year, UCI became a fully-fledged university. This meant that UCI and University of Lagos were the first two universities founded by the Federal Government in Nigeria, with the other three being regional. Shortly afterwards, the mid-west region was created and in 1970 the region opted for a university known as the University of Benin. The six universities established between the periods 1948-1970 are termed “the first generation universities” (Adewuyi and Okemakinde, 2013). During this period, universities in the country were under close control and observation of the Government. Appointments of council members and the vice-chancellor were politically motivated.

Between the years 1975 to 1980 a third national development plan was designed with the intention of opening four universities. The Government however established more universities instead and also took full control of the first four regional universities in 1975. These universities were: universities of Calabar, Ilorin, Jos, Sokoto, Maidugari, Port Harcourt, Royal Military Training, Kaduna and Ado Bayero, Kano. They are classified as second generation universities. During the second republic (1979-1983), the private sector participation in university education commenced. In the absence of

proper guidelines, these private institutions all turned out to be universities only in name with little or no impact. By 1984, all the 24 private universities established between 1980 and 1983 were abolished by the Federal Government. Nine years later, another law was made allowing the establishment of private universities based on their fulfilment and adherence to clear spelt out procedures by the government (Onyukwu, 2011). The third generation universities came to existence between 1984 to 1990. Eleven universities were created under the funding and control of the Federal and State Governments (five federal and six states) (Nwagwu and Agarín, 2008). The fourth generation universities are those founded during 1991 to 2008: they include more federal and state universities with the introduction of approved private universities. To further widen access to university education, the National Open University was reopened to offer education through open and distance learning (ODL) in 2001. Finally, the fifth generation universities are those formed from the year 2009 to present date. Currently, there are 143 universities in Nigeria consisting of 40 Federal, 42 state and 61 private universities as recognised by NUC the government umbrella body that oversees the administration of higher education in Nigeria (NUC, 2016). Under the purview of NUC are the 40 federal universities and dozens of teaching hospitals and colleges. While, State Government are responsible for the finance and administration of the 40 state universities. The NUC approves and accredits all university programs (Clark and Ausukuya, 2013).

Table 2.2 Summary of Universities Generations in Nigeria

Generation	Ownership and Governance	Period
First	Regional Government	1948-1970
Second	Regional Government. 24 Private universities were established by private investors.	1979-1983
Third	Federal and State Government. All private universities established were abolished.	1984-1990
Fourth	Federal and State Government, and Private ownership (foreigners and citizens)	1991-2008

Fifth	Mostly State Government and Private ownership (foreigners and citizens)	2009-to date
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Nigeria can indeed boast of significant increase in the number of universities since independence, but the issues of growth without development is often raised as the problem confronting the country, and it remains unresolved despite the increasing number of universities (Barinde, 2012).

Selection of Case Study Universities

University Alpha

University Alpha is a public federal university established in 1962 following the recommendation of the Ashby commission on “post-school certificate and higher education in Nigeria”. It is considered one of the largest universities in Nigeria and classified as a first generation university being among those created between the years 1940s-1970s. The main campus is located in the Northwest area of Nigeria. The university is presently made up about thirty thousand students and above eight thousand staff, and operating a split-site university (NUC, 2015).

More students try to gain admission into the university than any other university in the northern area of Nigeria, with more than seventy thousand applications for undergraduate courses (Jamb, 2012).

School of Humanities of Alpha

The foundation of Alpha’s school of humanities can be traced back to 1962 when it pioneered three educational institutions (Nigerian college of arts, science and technology; the clerical training centre and the Samaru agricultural research station), with the formation of a department of administration. The “new” school of humanities as it is commonly referred was formed in the early 1980s following the mergers of five faculties-administrations, education, law, social sciences and arts (ABU, 2014). It is located at Samaru campus with related off campus activities at Kongo. The school of humanities is the largest school of the university. It is identified as the largest campus-

based school of humanities in Nigeria, and has an international student composition across Africa (Rank and Review, 2016).

University Beta

University Beta is a Public state university that gained its status in 1999 and began operations in 2001 after its establishment as an institute of higher education. It traces its educational root to 1987 (making it a third generation university) where it was formed as the college of arts, science and technology. The main campus is located in the North central middle region of Nigeria. The university has a student body of around fifteen thousand, with about 78% of the student population are undergraduates with balancing profile of both male and females (NSU, 2014).

The university is made up of more ethnic/indigenous students where 60% of the students are from the state (southern region of the middle belt). The university has accomplished incomparable goals within its time of establishment; this is as a result of its determination and diligence in administration. The university is currently managed across three campuses (the seat of administration, school of sciences and the school of remedial studies). It is not ranked amongst the top universities in Nigeria (Rank and Review, 2016).

Beta's school of Humanities

This school began full operations in 2005 though it started since 1987. It is one of the growing schools as shown by the year of operation. It has linkages with other home and African partners. The school is situated on the main campus and it is popularly known as "the seat of Administration" (NSU, 2014).

University Cairo

University Cairo is an indigenous private owned university established in 2009 but commenced activities in 2011 with a foundation class and three faculties. The university is located in the heart of the capital city with a student profile of about 6000 at present from different states of the country and across borders (Baze, 2014).

Cairo's school of Humanities

The school started at the inception of the university in 2011 so it is relatively new as compared to other schools of humanities in the country. The school currently comprises of two faculties: business sciences and law both on the main campus.

2.2.2.2 Higher Education Institutions Structures in Nigeria Today

The higher education in Nigeria is provided by universities and further education institutions such as polytechnics, institutions of technology, colleges of education and professional institutions. The university and non-university higher education tracks are quite distinct with very little opportunity for lateral movement between the two (Clark and Sedgwick, 2004).

2.2.2.2.1 University and Further Education

According to Ekanola (2013: 184) a university is a social institution responsible for the provision of the highest level of formal education. And as a social institution, it is part of the social fabric of a given era that is committed to the education of members of the society. Stelmach (2012:5) in a report defined a university as *“an institution of higher education that grants its own degrees and normally undertakes the creation and extension of knowledge through research and scholarly activity, and the dissemination of knowledge through teaching, publication, and presentation”*. Panchamia (2010:1) writing on choice and competition in further education stated that further education has been defined as *“everything else because of the sheer breadth of its provision”*. It comprises of all compulsory post college education and training for individuals aged sixteen to nineteen and adults delivered in other further education aside the university. This includes diplomas, basic and technical skills, work-based training offered by other HEIs like the polytechnics, mono-technics, colleges of education and other innovative institutions. Non-university higher education in Nigeria is provided at special institutions. There are currently 414 HEIs in Nigeria comprising of: 143 universities, eighty-five colleges of education, 121 mono and polytechnics and sixty-five innovative enterprise institutions excluding other programs located outside HEIs with four regulatory bodies (Ogunyinka, 2013). For the purpose of this study, only universities are considered.

2.2.2.2.2 The structure and management of universities in Nigeria

Nigeria operates a three tier government: Federal, State and Local, with about 70% of schools in Nigeria owned and controlled by the Government. The senior secondary and HEIs (universities and further education) are run by the Federal and State Governments while the primary and junior secondary schools are managed by the Local Government. Managing these schools entails facility provision and maintenance, providing the curriculum, policy formulation and implementation, sanctioning and rewarding of teachers, regulating and controlling the learning process and also monitoring learning outcomes of the educational system (Onyeagbako, 2014).

The regulation and administration of universities is done at Federal level by a Government parastatal: the Federal Ministry of Education. The State Government regulates State universities through the use of assigned boards in conjunction with Federal bodies. The Federal and State Government have no interference with the operations of private universities but the guidelines and provisions of NUC-the overseeing body- are applicable to private universities.

Although universities share some common features with other service organisations, such as the provision of essential services to the economy, the nature and aim of their business is very different and the parameters of function tend to differ (Bimbaum, 2000). Universities in Nigeria are owned and controlled by the Federal, State Government or private investors, and this sets the disparity on how these universities are managed (Akpotu and Akpochafo, 2009). In essence Nigerian universities can be classified as either public or private. Public universities in Nigeria are institutions that receive direct subsidy from government. These institutions are much easily accessed by a lot of students because it is less expensive and offers a large scale of programmes that accepts both new and transfer students from other institutions who meet receiving institutions requirements; this is based on competitive struggle through examination. The large sizes of public universities in Nigeria foster diversity-having students and staff from wide backgrounds; while it also creates distance away from educational atmosphere-relationship between staff and students is often distant because of the population-, thereby influencing the institutions learning cycles. Students in private universities often build personal and strong relationships with lecturers, which improves and boost their communication, dialogue and learning (Ekong, 2013:64).

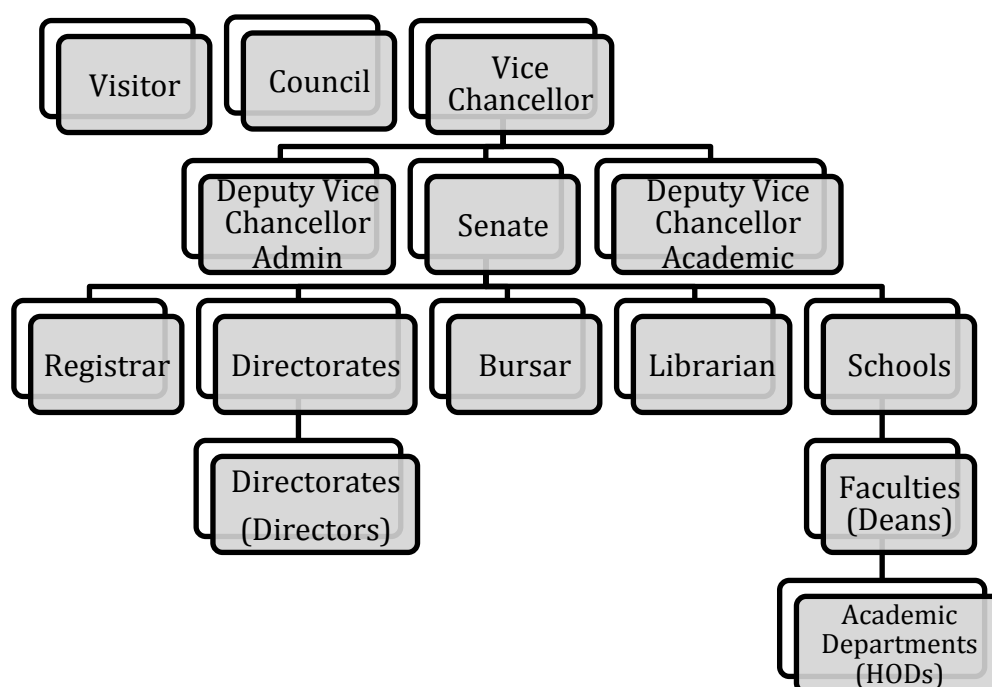
Private universities in Nigeria are considered institutions of greater national and international prestige. Private universities appear to be more than public universities in the country (refer to 2.2.2): Their rapid growth is as a result of the difficulties encountered by public institutions, through which their strength becomes evident (Iiusanya and Oyebade, 2007). Common features of private universities in Nigeria include: Their student enrolment is often small and selective but growing; they operate small class sizes- less than 100; they offer limited programs that are market friendly; their fees are usually high-expensive; they tend to rely and work mostly with part time lecturers, many of whom work at public universities; they are usually owned by private investors (both local and foreign), church or community and tend to provide education in line with vision; they are reliable for sound formation of individuals which in turn contribute to society (Amakwe, 2013: 206).

From 1970 to 1979 twelve states were created from the four regions that initially existed; at the moment there are 36 states in Nigeria. Following the creation of states, the Federal and State government made the pronouncement of establishing at least a Federal and State universities in each state. Private investors were permitted to invest in higher education by fulfilling and adhering to strict regulatory provisions presented by higher education regulatory bodies. Considering the presence of three major players in higher education, HEIs are unevenly distributed across states with some having more universities than others (Omuta, 2010). Admission to universities in Nigeria is highly competitive and based on results from the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) and the Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB), in which students are expected to gain a JAMB score of above 180 with a pass in English and four other courses relevant to intended course of study. Students with the above qualifications are eligible to sit for the University Matriculation Examination (UME) introduced in 1978 and conducted by JAMB with an expectancy pass point of fifty percent (Adewole, 2014). Students may also be admitted to study in university through 'direct entry' with a minimum of Merit Pass in the National Certificate of Education (NCE), National Diploma (ND) or other advanced level certificates such as the International Baccalaureate or 'O' and 'A' levels, which represent two years of postsecondary study, in addition to having the required number of SSCE credits (Clark and Sedgwick, 2004). Bachelor degree programmes are offered across the schools of humanities and sciences with a minimum

of four years in length. Master programmes are usually a year but in the event of a research qualification it becomes a two year program. While doctoral degrees are conferred between three to four years of study.

The administration of universities in Nigeria is legally provided for in the Education reform act 1999 and the Federal government is required to provide enabling policies and frameworks for the universities to function (Okebukola, 2006). University administration in Nigeria revolves around the vice-chancellor (VC) who heads the academic and administrative arms of the institution. The VC is supported by two deputy chancellors (administrative and academic); a number of key academic staff such as deans of schools/faculties and head of departments; and administrative staff- registrar, bursar and librarian in managing the affairs of the university (Erero, 1996). The activities of the academic and administrative arms are carried out through senate and committees of councils but in some situations other directorates and units are employed (Ogbogu, 2013). The three types of universities operate a similar structure with little differences in functions and titles and learning often occurs in these universities following the structure. A typical organisational structure a Nigerian university is depicted below:

Figure 2.1 Organogram of universities in Nigeria



Adapted From: NUC (2014)

- **Visitor (s)**-is the highest governing body of the university in charge of overall policy on directing and financing the university.
- **Council**- is responsible for the general management of the university's affairs, in particular the property and expenditure control of the institution.
- **Senate**- is the highest decision making body on academic matters in the university, headed by the VC.
- **Schools**- are basically two-humanities and sciences- broken down into faculties under the control of deans. Each faculty is further divided into departments managed by Heads of Departments who are accountable to deans.
- **Directorates**- are non-academic branches headed by directors who are saddled with specific tasks of providing for the university at large depending on issues. Examples include information and publication, security directorates.
- **Registrar**- is the chief administrative officer answerable to the VC. The registrar is responsible for the management of daily administration activities of the university.
- **Librarian**- is responsible for the administration of the library services and other related matters.
- **Bursar**- is the chief finance officer in charge of financial affairs of the university.

2.3 HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY IN NIGERIA

Educational policy in Nigeria has passed through significant phases-the colonial, independence and post-independence governance.

The Colonial Era Policy

Prior to the British conquest and subsequent formation of colonial Government in Nigeria, majority of the northern and southern areas comprised of empires, kingdoms, chiefdoms and semi-autonomous communities. In the northern region, Qur'anic education was prevalent and Islam was deeply entrenched in educational orientation and belief of individuals (Imam, 2001). The Southern region was made of several ethnic groups; each ethnic group had a unique traditional form of education based on culture,

beliefs and traditions, but all aimed at the same goal. The curricula in use was informal which included developing individuals physical and intellectual skills, character, creating a sense of belonging, inculcating respects for peers and elders and trainings toward the appreciation of the cultural heritage of the community (Fafunwa, 2004). The arrival of the colonial masters in 1842 paved way for the British policy of indirect rule, which limited the activities of missionaries in the northern region; thereby curtailing the spread of Christianity and western education, leading to a considerable educational gap between the two regions in Nigeria (Imam, 2003).

The amalgamation of the northern and southern regions in 1914 brought members of diverse ethnic groups and religion together as one country thereby creating a pluralistic society that led to a federal structure in Nigeria. After the Second World War in 1944, Nigeria experienced series of transformation: national liberation from colonialism, democratic transformation, and since then the educational policy in the country has been shaped by the desire to develop the nation based on socio-economic and political considerations (Fabumi, 2005). From 1944 to independence in 1960, Higher education was highly expanded in Nigeria, thereby forming the basis for promulgation of the 1948 Education ordinance. The Education Ordinance was the first educational legislation that covered the whole country, it decentralised education administration. The colonial Government formed an educational board responsible for policy on procedures for assessing grants. In 1952 another Education Ordinance was promulgated following the creation of the Eastern, Western in addition to the two regions in Nigeria. The Ordinance abolished the colonial educational board and empowered each region to develop its educational policy and system (Fafunwa, 2004).

The quest by Nigerians for self-government resulted in two constitutional conferences between Nigerian political leaders and the British colonial government in 1951 and 1954. The consultation gave rise to a new federal constitution in 1954, making Nigeria a federation (according to the constitution) with Lagos as the Federal capital. The constitution emphasized decentralization and granted each region the power to make laws and educational policies of its territory and citizens. This decision promulgated the Education Laws in Western region in 1955, Eastern and Northern region in 1956 and the Lagos ordinance in 1957 all derived from the "Education Act 1944 of Wales and

England". Components of educational systems were defined differently by each region, but exhibited similar administrative and statutory educational features (Imam, 2012). In 1959, the Sir Eric Ashby Commission was set up by the Federal Government to identify the future high-level manpower needs of Nigeria. This Commission examined the need for higher education and became the first official comprehensive review of higher education in the country. The submitted Ashby report prescribed education as a tool for achieving national economic and social development (Olulube *et al* 2013). The educational administration remained decentralised until independence in 1960 (first republic) when the Federal Government provided the institutional basis for political development, thereby degenerating regional Government into political constituencies. Religious and ethnic differences continued to gain stronger foothold than national identity (Yusuf and Yusuf, 2009).

The Independence/post-independence Policy

At independence, educational policy was most concerned with using higher education institutions to develop manpower for economic development. The legacies of colonialism underlie the numerous issues of national building and educational policies facing Nigeria. The educational policy was narrow in scope and failed to meet the expectations of Nigerians. Criticisms of the educational policy hovered around obsolete methodology, irrelevant curricula, high drop-out and repetition rates, many graduates were considered dependent with low initiatives, inequality of access to education thereby creating gaps between ethnic groups (Obiakor, 1998). In 1969, the educational system and its goals were reviewed and redirected at the National Curriculum Conference by the Nigerian Educational Research Council (NERC). The conference was the first national attempt to challenge and change the colonial orientation of educational system in Nigeria. This was done in pursuit of national consciousness and self-reliance through educational process (Adamu, 1994). Consolidating on the gains of the curriculum conference, the Federal Government in 1973 instituted a body of educational experts representing the Christian and Muslim organisations in Nigeria to deliberate on a truly Nigerian national educational policy; on conclusion, the body provided a Nation Policy on Education draft. During the period, the Federal Government took over control of missionary schools (Imam, 2012). The creation of more states (summing up to nineteen) in 1976 made State Governments also responsible for the

regulation, provision and management of education, resulting in a more unified educational system across all states. Into the year 1976, Nigeria improved its revenue status through oil boom, and the Federal Government embarked on the provision of free education and expansion of access into Higher Education Institutions. The unified educational system at the time was based on 7-5-2-3 educational policy: seven years primary education, five years secondary school, two years higher school certificate level and three years university education (Amaghionyeodiwe and Osinubi, 2006). By 1977, the submitted Educational Policy draft became applicable in Nigeria. The policy was geared towards addressing the issues of educational relevance to the needs and aspirations of citizens, and to promote national unity, integration and development. In order to achieve these objectives, the policy made the Federal Government responsible for education in terms of centralised control and funding, because centralisation was considered a departure from colonial educational policy (where cost sharing was between proprietary bodies, parents and the government). The new policy introduced the 6-3-3-4 system modelled after the American educational system: six years primary education, three years junior secondary school, three senior secondary school and four years university education (Ibukun and Aboluwodi, 2010).

A new constitution was ushered in 1979, as a second attempt at democracy. A legal basis of education was provided for in the constitution, with the responsibility of education shared among three tiers of Government: the Federal, State and Local Government. The Federal Government was granted more power than the other tiers of Government. The above constitutional provisions led to the revision of the National Policy of Education in 1981 (Imam, 2012). Series of crisis on educational funding such as inadequate funding, educator allowances cropped up, resulting in the introduction of school fees; the recognition of the importance and uniqueness of language as a means of preserving the culture of the people and forging national unity led to the revision of the 1981 policy prescribing that each citizen be encouraged to learn at least one major language (Hausa, Ibo, Yoruba) other than the mother tongue (FRN, 1981). In 1983, Education Policy was revised by a different regime, the military rule. The Federal Military Government introduced several decrees to regulate and guide education conduct (Obiakor, 1998). Notably among other Decrees are:

- Decree No: 16 of 1985- setting the bench mark for National Education minimum standards and school establishments.

- Decree No: 26 of 1988- the prohibition of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) from trade union activities.
- A 9-3-4 system of education: nine years of universal compulsory school, three years senior secondary school and four years of university education (Imam, 2012).

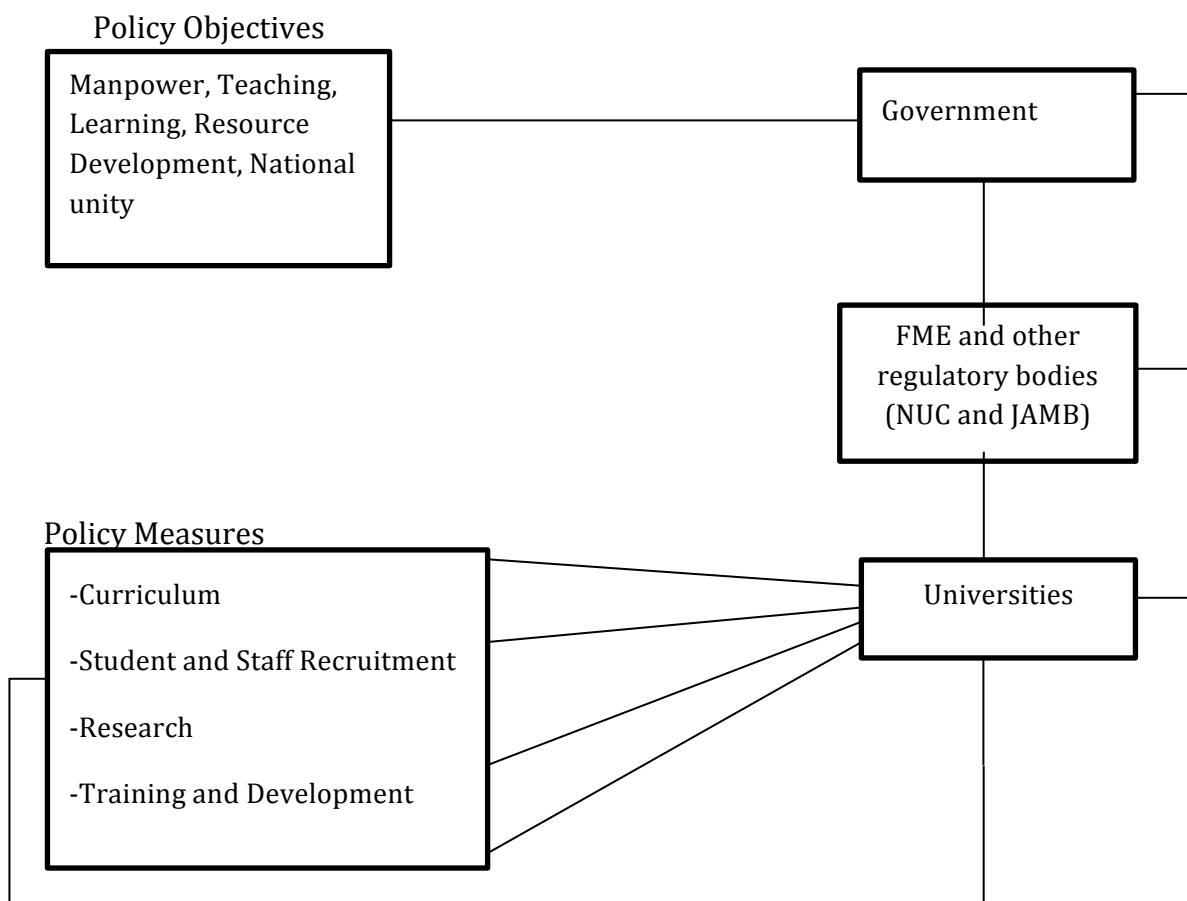
Again in 1998 and 2004 the National Policy on Education was revised. The 1998 revised policy came under the 1999 constitution of the Federal republic of Nigeria in the country's third attempt at democracy. The policy was revised to reflect the development need of the country (Okonjo-Iweala, 2012). Woolman (2001) argued that there is an observable relationship between education and national development. So the policy was revised to accommodate transformations in education brought about by technology. The policy proposed that admissions into HEIs be based on a 60 (science): 40 (humanities) per cent basis, and more universities and institute of technology were established to reflect the country's bid to launch into a technological nation. Also the policy provided for secular education with opportunities for religious consideration, while the Islamic schools continue in the north because of their sensitive local custom (Nwagwu, 2007). However the policy failed to achieve the goal for HEIs admission dependency ratio as the school of humanities continued to attract prospective students due to social demands. The 2004 policy was further revised in 2013. The 2013 National Policy on Education revision presents the latest version of Educational Policy in Nigeria. The Policy is based on the dynamic model of formulating educational reforms adaptable to change and appropriate for a multi-ethnic and developing nation like Nigeria. The Latest policy has the following features:

- 1) It set specific objectives for the nation and its education;
- 2) It addressed the problem of unity and laid foundation for national integration;
- 3) It aimed at realising a self-reliant and self-sufficient nation to meet the country's developmental needs.
- 4) It gave a comprehensive structure of educational system and laid the foundation for the 1-6-3-3-4 system of education in Nigeria (i.e. one year pre-primary education, six years primary schooling, three years junior secondary education, three years senior secondary school and four years university education);
- 5) It made education in Nigeria the government's responsibility in terms of centralized control and funding of education;

- 6) It had a broad curriculum which aimed at creating learning opportunity for all individuals, irrespective of their sex, peculiar background or ability; and
- 7) It also specified the functions of adult education, non-formal education, special education and open and distance learning.
- 8) to provide accessible, affordable and quality learning opportunities in formal and informal education in response to the needs and interests of citizens.
- 9) To provide high quality career counselling and lifelong learning programmes that equips students with the knowledge and skills for self-reliance and the world to work (NERDC, 2013:26-27).

The machinery for the design and implementation of HE policy in Nigeria is presented diagrammatically below:

Figure 2.2 Machinery for the design and implementation of HE policy



Adopted from: Akpan (1990:295), Adeoti (2015: 119-121)

According to this arrangement, the Federal Government is the sole authority with power to design and decide policy objectives for universities and assign agencies to set

up measures for achieving the objectives. The implementing agency is the Federal Ministry of Education through distinct parastatals: NUC and JAMB (Adeoti, 2015).

2.3.1 Federal Ministry of Education (FME)

The Federal Ministry of Education was established in 1988 as the central Government body that directs education in Nigeria with the mission *“to promote quality education and life-long learning relevant to the dynamics of global change through effective policy formulation and the setting and monitoring of standards at all levels; and delivery of tertiary education through federal institutions”* (FME, 2007: 3). It is headed by a minister and other supervisory personnel who steer the operations of distinct departments. For effective and efficient discharge of duties, the Ministry is structured into eight departments; of these three units are common services departments namely:

- Planning, research and statistics
- Administration, and
- Finance and accounts.

While the remaining five are operations units-

- Primary and secondary education
- Higher education
- Technology and science education
- Educational support services, and
- The federal inspectorate services

The operational functions are defined by the statutory mandate of the ministry. In addition to departments, the ministry consists of a number of parastatals that manage different educational levels in the country. For the purpose of this research only those related to higher education will be discussed (Enukoar, 2003).

2.3.1.1 National Universities Commission (NUC)

The overview of higher education is incomplete without unveiling the relationship and functions of the National Universities Commission in relation to the management and learning in universities in Nigeria. NUC is one parastatal under the Federal Ministry of Education, accountable to the ministry. The National Universities Commission (NUC) initially set up in 1962 as an administrative unit in the cabinet office, based on the

recommendation of Ashby (NUC, 2014). The commission was reconstituted in 1974 under NUC decree No 1 into an autonomous body with the statutory mandate to provide quality assurance for institutions of higher education with the aim of ensuring orderliness, a well-coordinated and productive educational system that guarantees relevant and valuable education for national development, and global competitiveness. However, these functions were expanded by Decree No 49 of 1988 to include the following:

- To offer advisory duties to the Head of Federal Government, through the Minister on the financial and other needs of existing institutions, formation of new universities and other degree-granting institutions in Nigeria
- To prepare and present periodic reports after consultation with state Governments, universities, the National Manpower Board and appropriate regulatory bodies on future plans for the development of higher education institutions
- To set minimum learning and academic standards, approve academic curriculum, monitor schools' operations and engage in accreditation exercises in all academic programmes in Nigerian universities (Ibijola, 2014).

2.3.1.2 Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB)

The formation of the joint admission matriculation board was promulgated by Act no 2 of 1978 of the federal military government on the 13th February, 1978 but was later amended to Decree 33 of 1988 by the Federal Executive Council under the control of the federal ministry of Education (JAMB, 2014).

The decree empowered the board to:

- Conduct matriculation examinations for admission into all higher education institutions in Nigeria
- Appoint qualified personnel in respect to matriculation examinations and assessment
- Review universities on a yearly basis in order to account for student vacancies available in each institution

- Collate and disseminate information on admission and adhoc matters relevant to the discharge of the board's functions (Adetunji, 2014).

Aside these external players regulating and interfering with the learning and affairs of universities in Nigeria, trade unions play crucial roles in the lives of these institutions also.

2.3.2. University Unions in Nigeria

Unionism plays a critical role in the learning and operations of universities in Nigeria. University unions consult, provide learning opportunities, and bargain on behalf of members (Efanga et al. 2014), but consequently they also undertake harsh actions which tends to threaten the learning in universities (Asiyai, 2013). For instance, John (2015) stressed that Government's failure to fulfil their responsibilities to universities often results in negative actions like strike and other drastic activities like riot by union members. Four prominent unions are recognised in the universities in Nigeria. They are Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU), Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU) and Student Union Government (SUG). ASSU stands as the most influential. The main aim of these unions is to promote education and learning and protect the welfare of their members (Balkaran, 2011). In describing ASUU, Iyayi (2002) says the union can be postulated as a trade union having a combination of temporary and permanent workers, with the purpose of regulating working terms and conditions of the employment of members. In specific terms, the principles that guide ASUU as a union are professionalism, objectivity and hard work, the spirit of commitment and diligence, sacrifice, team solidarity and internal democracy. Adhering to these principles, ASUU has tussled with government and university authorities in pursuit of disturbing issues like university autonomy, system funding and work conditions (Asiyai, 2013). The issue of university autonomy has been a relentless matter between the government and ASUU. The Federal Government has stated that the administration of higher education and learning, the academic freedom to select students, design courses, appoint staff shall be the sole responsibilities of universities. But Government continues to hide under the cover of respecting this freedom on the condition that these areas are in relation with national goals and continues to interfere in universities affairs through the federal ministry of education (Arikewuyo, 2008). University funding is another serious reason for conflict between

unions and the Government, and this is evident in the inappropriate condition of universities. The effect of poor funding has depleted universities in Nigeria seriously, causing unfavourable work and learning conditions, the provision of limited resources and the loss of academics to neighbouring African countries thereby affecting the learning in universities (Olayiwola, 2012). To this end, ASUU stands in continuous battle with Government policies, engagements and responsibilities as it relates to learning and operations in universities. In spite of all the fight, universities in Nigeria still face challenges that affect their existence, which in turn shapes learning in the institutions.

2.4 CHALLENGES FOR UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA

According to Oladosu (2013:126) *“Perhaps the greatest challenge confronting the universities in Nigeria and probably others, which were established on Western libertarian philosophy, is moral perversion and their potential to inflict on humanity an intellectual class which would glory in social apostasy and spiritual bankruptcy. Evidence for the ascendancy of these nihilistic, atheistic and hedonistic ideals in the university system in Nigeria includes the ... adoption and reification of Western cultures ... and the consequent loss and elision of the role of the university as the bastion of humanity’s loftiest ideals and the repository of greatest values and standards”*. Building the foundation of Nigerian universities on western orientation has presented intellectual, management and fiscal issues to these institutions, which might have been mitigated if indigenous education was in use. Several factors pose as challenges to universities in Nigeria and that threatens their operations, learning and survival as organisations. Adamu (2011:91) argues that *“the major problem facing almost all developed and certainly all developing countries is the basic dilemma that arises from continued high social and individual demand for access to various forms of studies and educational services at a time of growing constraints on public budgets”*. This issue stands as the principal strained relation between the government and universities in most counties. Universities have to show their ability to compete for financial attention from public funding sources. This is because inadequate funding is a critical issue that challenges most universities in Nigeria. Asiyai (2013:163) exclaims *“the problem of inadequate funding of education has been a bane to educational development in the country [Nigeria]”*, claiming, the major constraint to achieving academic excellence and learning in universities is financial

constraint which creates difficult situations for staff to perform their tasks. This is evident in universities inability to equip their systems and provide basic facilities required for learning and operation (Ekundayo and Ajayi, 2009).

Four major factors are accounted for the difficulty associated with financing universities in Nigeria: the enrolment pressure is one contributing factor, especially as Nigeria combines the growing populations of Secondary school leavers with inadequate university capacity to manage growing demand. Many candidates seeking few spaces in universities is indeed a big problem for universities in Nigeria. The challenge of growing demography, especially individuals graduating from secondary schools is however not new. This has implications for expansion and provisions in universities, as well as on funding. The hosting of growing population of university applicants or prospective students in different universities in Nigeria is not enough; rather learning and constant update of knowledge must be the main aim for pursuit for students. This is because through learning, knowledge is managed and updated- that is acquiring knowledge, dialogue, consultation and exchange of knowledge between all partners of the university including students (Egbokhare, 2013; 103). Secondly, the probability of increasing unit per costs in universities growing faster than the overall unit costs in the economy, a possible effect of rapid change in cost of technology and greater demand for dynamic courses of study (Iyioma and Olayiwola, 2014). The third factor is the increasing scarcity of public revenue commonly experienced by most countries due to budget constraints being faced by governments, competition from other public needs and amenities like health, public infrastructure, and the inability of most governments to maintain former methods of generating public revenues. Finally, the cause of difficult situation of funding is basically political, *“it is the growing dissatisfaction ... with the rigidities and inefficiencies of the public sector generally, and a corresponding drift towards market solutions, including privatization, deregulation and decentralization of functions still considered ‘public’”* (Adamu, 2011: 96). Acknowledging the relevance and contribution of universities to the nation in the 21st century, the Federal Government/ ASUU Re-negotiation committee (2009) acknowledged that the country’s survival lies in its universities ability to produce applied and theoretical knowledge in science, technology and humanities and also the government’s ability in meeting the major financial needs of universities in order to revitalise and empower these institutions.

Revitalising universities in Nigeria will aid and ease the learning challenges associated with funding and limited resources of the institutions.

The issue of regulation and control affects the autonomy of universities in Nigeria, the role of external players in ensuring the stability of the institutions. The Nigerian universities are those in struggle with both the government and academics, with each claiming greater stake of the responsibility for ensuring how these institutions learn and operate in the country (Ekundayo and Ajayi, 2009). Universities should enjoy autonomy as institutions, governing their affairs internally, learning and making decisions on academic and other relevant matter. Isichei (2013:18) argued “*Universities did their work best, and were most useful to society and state, when they were isolated from immediate external pressures*”. NUC as a Federal Government Parastatal has been given the power by the Federal Government to set minimum academic requirements and liaise between the government and universities in areas of learning, staff development, provision of library materials and laboratory equipment and consumables on a discretionary basis that universities adhere to the norms and directives of the Federal Government (Samuel et al 2012:157). Through the expanding responsibilities of NUC, the Federal Government is able to obtain greater financial and academic control over public universities. However, since funding remains the critical factor influencing the learning in universities, and since the government controls the funding process of seventy percent of universities in Nigeria, the challenge for fiscal diversification is applied by universities to ensure their survival. Many universities respond by introducing or devising means of generating internal revenue to enable them learn and achieve their goals (Ogunyinka, 2013:523). This results in learning differently as the situation presents itself.

Learning in universities in Nigeria play crucial roles in technology and knowledge transfer and development at two levels: as they learn, they possess the capability to develop, manage and use information, knowledge and skills required to utilise and organise technology within their institutions and other industries. With the spread of knowledge-based industries, universities are sites where basic research needed for the advancement of such industries are undertaken, and the training of researchers and appliers of research for/in industries are found (Adeosun, 2012). In carrying out these roles, difficulties compounded by globalization on the need for new technologies and

innovations are faced in knowledge based economy and these institutions. Globalization is an emergence of a global society in which economic, political, cultural and environmental activities occurring in one part of the world affects other parts of the world. The process of globalization is characterised by scientific and technological advancement in developed countries, which has changed the patterns of communication, living and other human and organisational activities in the world, including learning (Anyikwa et al 2012). Nigeria and its universities are confronted with the challenges of globalization from two perspectives: The learning and acquisition of new knowledge and skills by organisations in commerce, industry and other technological activities from other countries. Secondly, the utmost need to acquire knowledge and learn about indigenous political, socio-economic and technological activities and improve upon these activities as this will promote organisational and national self-reliance and the ability to export indigenous technology to foreign countries. However, this relies heavily on universities who are seats of knowledge creation, exchange and use for and in meeting the expectations and challenges of globalization (Abdulkareem & Fasasi, 2010:5). Bamiro (2012) posits that learning and quality education is demanded in universities to meet the standards in growth, health and physical survival in a complex world, *"HEIs are, in the main relied upon to provide the broad array of quality education and training for the development of the individual for flexibility, adaptability and continuous learning"* (5). Whatever form of learning universities take whether professional, liberal, or technical should be able to nurture, form and refine minds and create independent learners. Learning empowers recipients with relevant knowledge, skills, ideas and values required to make informed decision.

Quality in higher education to Asiyai (2013: 163) is *"the worth of the inputs into higher education systems, lecturers, instructional facilities and evaluation procedures which translates to the output"*. Quality universities entail having members and products that learn in order to possess the capability of performing expected tasks and competing within peers. Quality universities produce intellectual, moral, physical, emotional and socially developed organisational members. To one end, the Nigerian Government is the main investor and manager of education and training of prospective researchers and technological innovators, down to enabling problem-solving, learning and innovative cultures through universities. This responsibility has been defined in terms of national

development and competitiveness to justify high levels of spending on education (Ololube et al, 2013:121); however, the failure to establish strict national policies on national innovativeness results in under-investment in human capital and lagging innovation experienced in the country. The government would need to promote and develop high level research-training universities with the aim of achieving better institutional learning and promoting sound national innovation system- *“The success of Nigerian higher education institution depends upon its ability to identify and respond to technological changes in order to elevate teaching and learning processes”* (Ololube, 2009: 143). More effort is needed on choice of technologies for use that meets people’s needs. Considering high use of technology in the globe, learning is and will continue to be web-based and learner-centric. The long –term implication of web-based learning in universities in Nigeria will be in terms of cost, operational issues as technology is at its infancy in Nigeria. And there is also a need for research and update of ICT policies that will foster faster transformation in ICT introduction and maintenance in universities (Achimugu et al 2010: 30).

Most universities in Nigeria are short of academic staff. Lecturers are the hub of any university; they transmit educational policies and changes into practice and action. Without inspiring and well informed lecturers in place, universities as organisations can rarely learn and keep abreast with the world, *“practicing [lecturers] must frequently update [their] knowledge in a dynamic world of ours to be relevant in the profession. An obsolete [lecturer] loses touch with realities of life and will gradually lose status...”* (Okemakinde et al 2013:971). Nigerian lecturers are often accused for the wrongs in universities because they are considered to be apathetic and uncommitted to their profession. Hyacinth and Mann (2014) revealed that most Nigerian lecturers have negative attitude towards teaching and that affects their learning and that of the organisation. This is because most lecturers joined the educational profession due to their inability to qualify for other preferred occupation with higher entry requirements.

2.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter, first the idea of higher education has been discussed, presenting the definitions and features of higher education. The Nigerian educational system of higher education has been examined with reference to learning and mechanisms employed for

learning in the different systems of education before and after colonialization. Also the development of universities has been analysed following the recommendation of Asquith and Elliot and Ashby commissions before and after independence, which identified that universities in Nigeria are classified as either Federal, State or Private universities based on the level of Government ownership or private ownership. This classification further clarifies how these universities are managed and how their learning is driven.

This chapter has also discussed higher education changing policies in Nigeria due to changes in Government regimes and how it does shape the operations and learning in universities. In addition, the machineries of policy design and implementation for universities have been reviewed with their roles in universities learning. NUC and JAMB have been identified as the two major machineries for universities operating under the Federal Ministry of Education on Federal level to manage and oversee the functions of universities. Finally, the challenges of universities as regards learning have been discussed, with funding, Government interference and the growing population of applicants standing as the major challenges experienced by universities in Nigeria.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews relevant literature on organizational learning as the theoretical foundation for this study and develops a frame of reference for investigation. This review aids in identifying the gap in literature and provides a basis for focusing on specific research questions identified in chapter one. This chapter is divided into four main sections.

The first section is concerned with a basic review on the development of organizational learning by considering the contributions and arguments of early scholars and how it advanced to recent arguments within the field; and also the major approaches used by scholars in investigating the subject matter. This then leads to the conceptualization of organizational learning, the levels and process of OL as argued by different perspectives. Although OL begins with individual learning but that does not constitute the sufficient condition rather it is a process that involves the interaction between individual, group and organizational levels.

The second section reviews the concept of organizational learning mechanisms as the arrangements that enables the interactions between the levels of learning. These arrangements are considered as structural, procedural, cultural and cognitive that facilitates the acquisition and processing of information relevant for organizational use.

The third section reviews literature on the elements shaping organizational learning as presented by scholars. These elements stem from the internal and external environment of the organization and they shape the operations of learning mechanisms and the process of learning in organizations.

Finally, the fourth section deals with specific studies on organizational learning in higher education institutions and the Nigerian context in order to establish the need for this study especially in the context of study. In this section, a frame of reference is developed for this study from which the research questions are identified.

3.1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING

The 20th century

Ideas on organisational learning gained prominence in the 20th century following the debate between the economists and behaviourists. Economic theories of the firm became dominant during mid to late 1900's, yet several scholars, especially those belonging to the behavioural school of thought criticised the economic theories because they were dissatisfied with their claims. Theorists like March, Simon and Cyert criticised the classical economic theory on the stands that its models were jejune (oversimplified) and contradicts empirical findings.

March and Simon (1985) disprove the claim of economic models "*that organisational decision outcomes are uniquely determined by environmental constraints*" (Schulz, 2000: 3), presenting that organisations could address their decisions and matters in a behaviourally informed way. This idea however pioneered remarkable themes which proved highly relevant in subsequent research and in contributions to learning. The core- learning related idea in their view is that organisations face recurrent decision situations, and in response, they develop highly complex and organised forms of responses known as *performance programs*. The main occasion for program adaptation arises from the decline in performance below expectation levels; that is when performance is considered sub-standard. Yet expectations levels also adapt to certain factors like past performance and performance of reference groups (Augier, 2004). Therefore, program adaptation is the outcome of selective experiences with improvement opportunities.

Cyert and March (1963) focus on organisational learning was sharpened in the behavioural perspective of the firm. They conceived the firm as an adaptive system with internal complexity, capable of displaying considerable autonomy and producing outcomes not uniquely influenced by external constraints. Organisational learning was constructed in a *learning cycle* in which organisations responded to environmental forces by adjusting specific operating procedures (SOPs) previously utilised. SOPs are essentially equivalent to performance programs propounded by March and Simon; but SOPs are likely to lead to better and preferred outcomes, so they are frequently used. In fact Cyert and March envisioned multi-level operating procedures which could achieve

organisational adaptation, guide how organisations change behaviourally in response to feedbacks. Higher level operating procedures would guide how lower-level procedures are transformed in reaction to long-run feedback and vice versa. They further proposed that SOPs would adapt more readily and rapidly than higher level procedures.

The above views present a creative tension between two images of adaptation. Firstly, organisational learning could be considered as a rational organisational trait, compatible with the rational assumptions and arguments of the economists. In this view, the process of organisational learning is aimed at improving organisational performance, which in the long term could result in better fit between organisational arrangements and environmental constraints. Secondly, organisational learning could be seen as a complex, slow adaptation process, sensitive to variations in organisational features. These are features more related to the notion of bounded rationality, which assumes actors are goal-oriented but they encounter limitations in decision making in attempt to achieve these goals (Jones, 1999: 299). Both views continue to contribute relevantly to the works on organisational learning.

Building on the notion of bounded rationality March and Olsen (1975) examine experiential learning in organisations under situations of ambiguous or conflicting goals. They argued that the learning models of rational adaptation including the learning cycle were impractical. Rather ambiguity prevails, because individual and organisational goals can be controversial, experiences can be misleading and interpretations are complicated. March and Olsen (1975) however examined four learning cycles during ambiguity to explain the role of ambiguity in learning; the role-constrained learning, superstitious learning, audience learning and learning under ambiguity. In the *role-constrained learning*, people's role definitions limit their influence on behaviour, bringing their learning to bear on their actions, thereby resulting to inertia. In *superstitious learning*, the organisation learns through the learning cycle, but organisational actions have little influence on environmental response. Most learning in medicine portrays this aspect. While in *audience learning*, what occurs is basically learning not necessarily adaptation; and the relationship between individual action and organisational action becomes problematic. Finally, in *learning under ambiguity*, it is difficult to define what happens or justify the occurrence. Individuals interpret causal connections based on insufficient and inaccurate information about their environment,

thereby drawing from myths and illusions. Together these four aspects suggest learning does not necessarily result in improvement, even though learning is intendedly adaptive. Instead, when ambiguity is present, events and learning occur and are justified based on people's beliefs and perceptions.

Incorporating learning under ambiguity, Levinthal and March (1981) introduced a comprehensive and formalised model of learning with focus on search for new technologies. The model entertained ambiguity in two phases: first, the impact of such adopted technology on performance was considered uncertain (could not be predicted); and secondly, adopted technologies were seen to either advance or deteriorate over time. By varying the levels of uncertainty, its effect in the model could be explored. Simulations of the model showed the following: returns from search were dependent on time frame; in uncertain environments, similar organisations will learn to focus on a search strategy; approaches adopted by organisations were characterized by intense path dependencies; and fast learners move more than slow learners because of their ability to understand and react to situations quickly, thereby relieving slow learners the necessity of responding.

Beyond the 20th century

Although Organisational learning dates back to the sixties in response to claims presented by neoclassical economists; a reasonable size of research has been carried out in the area beyond the sphere of economics to a broader scope. Organisational learning as a concept has "*evolved into a diverse network of loosely interconnected clusters of ideas*" (Schulz, 2000: 5). The uneven development of the concept cast the difficulty in tracing its recent history as a continuous succession of dominant ideas. Notwithstanding, some parts of this network progress to larger and more recognised clusters of ideas than others and they serve as reference points for tentative parting of the field.

Organisational Learning Vs Learning Organisation

The concept of organisational learning has grown across different disciplines. Two major developments have led to the growth of organisational learning significantly. It has attracted the attention of scholars across different fields that previously had little interest in the subject matter. This action has resulted in having a conceptually

fragmented understanding, and representatives of different disciplines now contest over scholars with meticulous models of organisational learning. Another development is that organisations and businesses have inferred the commercial significance of organisational learning (Easterby-Smith and Araujo, 1999). The attempt by most theorists in organisational learning has been devoted towards identifying ideal frameworks or forms which organisations could seek to emulate in reality (Smith, 2001).

The central orienting point into the twenty first century has been the notion of the learning organisation. A term coined and defined by Senge (1990:3) as *“organisations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together”*. The learning organisation is considered the ideal, *“towards which organisations have to evolve in order to be able to respond to the various pressures”* (Finger and Brand, 1999: 136). This ideal organisational form views individual and collective learning as key similar to the key levels of organisational learning as defined by some scholars (Antonacopoulou 2006; Crossan et al 1999; Dasgupta 2012). Tsang (1997: 74) proposed two main approaches to addressing the confusion namely, the prescriptive stream dealing with the question “How should an organisation learn?” and the descriptive “How does an organisation learn?” distinguishing between the two streams, descriptive aims at revealing more about the nature of organisation and organizing, while the prescriptive view explicates towards the learning organisation which is more about how to intervene to improve learning. Most scholars concur that organisational learning and learning organisation vary in complexity, but they can coexist (Ortenblad 2001; Sunassee and Haumant 2004; Yeo 2005). Gorelick (2006) stressed that a deep learning cycle and recognition needs to occur for organisations to be effective as learning organisations, and that takes time. Reviewing on learning organisation, Ortenblad (2004) argues that a true learning organisation entails the combination of crucial distinct aspects that cannot be treated separately. These aspects are organisational learning, developing a learning environment and creating learning structures. Therefore, it can be concluded that organisational learning is the activity and the process by which organisations attain the ideal form of organisation (learning

organisation). However, Lipshitz et al (2002: 94) argue *“no organisation can be truly classified as a learning organisation. Rather, the extent and quality of organisational learning can be determined by assessing the number, variety and effectiveness of organisational learning mechanisms operating in different units and at different levels as well as by identifying the horizontal and vertical links among OLMs throughout the organisation”*. In their view, the extent and level of learning and utilization of OLMs is what matters in understanding how organisations learn and not merely their classification as learning organisations. This research is therefore interested in the activity and process of learning in organisations.

3.1.1 THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING

A number of different approaches have been adopted in the study of organisational learning, drawing on diverse traditions. Scholars suggest several classifications of these with four major approaches emerging. Each approach posits alternate models of learning emphasizing the need to examine different concepts and variables (Crossan et al 1999; Shrivastara, 1983). It is therefore relevant to look into these approaches to organisational learning.

3.1.1.1 Behaviourist approach

The first significant psychological theories of learning were developed within the field of behaviourism. This paradigm limited its scientific study only to those things which could be observed directly, avoiding the use of internal ‘mentalist’ concepts, such as thought, to explain behaviour. This narrowed the explanations of behaviour and learning to material parts of the situation that could be seen and described. Based on their explanations, individual and organisational behaviour are therefore expressed purely in terms of conditioned responses to environmental stimuli (Mergel 1998:4).

For an organisation to be considered learning, as this approach suggest (Gherardi 2006; Swieringa and Wierdsma 1992; Thompson, 2012), a change in its practices, activities and routine or a form of improvement must be observed, in fact learning should be measurable; as organisations are likely to learn more when the learning is associated with favourable outcomes. For instance, Argote (2013) explains organisational learning

as a process that improves organisational efficiency, accuracy and profits; while Argyris and Schon (1978:1996) consider learning in organisations as the modification of organisational activities due to the detection and correction of errors. Along the same line, organisational learning is further debated as the tracking of changes occurring within organisations. This could be achieved by measuring the learning of the organisation through models like the learning curve of Dutton and Thomas (1984), Muth model (1986), Huberman model (2001) and Fang model (2011). However, this no longer seems to be a realistic account of learning, as organisations are capable of learning without an associated observable change or outcome but purely resident in organisational members' cognition and organisational memory and as a means of adaptation (Smith, 1999; 2003). Similar to the words of Dodgson (1993:380) that *"Organisational learning is as natural as learning in individuals as they attempt to adjust and survive in an uncertain and competitive world"*, and not primarily for outcomes.

3.1.1.2 Cognitive approach

The attempt to address the weaknesses of the behaviourist views of learning led to the development of cognitive models, replacing the behaviourist strand as the dormant theory in the 1960s that acknowledged the limitations of understanding learning purely in terms of stimulus response and behaviour change. Instead, cognitivists studied individual and organisational learning through the function of information- information processing (Tusting and Barton, 2003). This view of learning is rooted in Gestalt psychology, which drew attention to the significance of perception, insight and meaning. In particular, it identified the relevance of learning in relation to the moments, experiences are reorganised so that the learner or the learning unit sees things in different or new ways (Chiva and Alegre 2005; Carlson and Heth 2010). As oppose considering learning only as changes in observable behaviour, this school rather understands learning as involving changes in mental constructs and processes, the development and increasing sophistication of 'mental maps' for representing one's environment. Since these processes are not directly or physically observable, they are understood by making inferences about these internal cognitive processes (LEI, 2008a). Learning according to Huber (1991), Castaneda (2007), Crossan et al (1999), Dixon (1992) is defined by the process not necessarily some sort of effectiveness or outcome as organisational learning does not often lead to improvement or effectiveness.

Similarly, Dodgson (1993) asserts that the end result of organisational learning is not always effectiveness or improvement. In essence, it is more about the process than the product and is therefore demonstrated by activities that improve reflexes, promote critical thinking or assist people learn different patterns of association (Tusting and Barton, 2003).

3.1.1.3 Humanistic approach

The Humanistic view builds on the potential and desire for growth as a basic assumption, considering individuals and organisations as having unlimited potentials to improve themselves and seek fulfilment. This approach is guided by models (Rogers and Freiberg 1993; Maslow 1968) that define learning in relation to transformation and development.

As much as people possess intrinsic drive towards growth and well-being, organisations have their drive towards achieving and fulfilling their organisational aim, which are usually evident in achieving market share/leadership, provision of exceptional services and profit making. Rogers built his theory around the idea that a single force of life known as the 'actualising tendency' exist- an inbuilt motivation, present in every existing unit, which makes the very best of their existence- thereby motivating learning (cited in Smith 1999, 2003). Learning in organisations here is motivated by their potential to grow; their drive in an attempt to actualize their aims by being solely taking responsibility for their learning. This notion however mirrors the "learning organisation" as the organisation responsible for its organisational learning and building by creating a conducive learning environment- an environment where learning is the order of the day (Torlak, 2004). 2003).

3.1.1.4 Social and contextual approach

In social and contextual perspective, the learner becomes socially accepted and an effective member within a community. This is commonly referred to as the community of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991; Rashman et al 2009). Learning does not occur solely in the learner, but in the group/community in which they belong or work. Learning involves a shared process which occurs through observing, commune working (working together) and being part of a larger group, which includes members of varying levels of experience, able to stimulate one another's development (Easterby-Smith and

Araujo 1999; Gherardi et al 1998). In this view, individuals and organisations only learn from the competent through cooperation and dialogue but with the emphasis on being part of a larger system. Consciously or not, organisations learn through dialogue and social interaction. Contributing to the relevance of dialogue in one's setting; Oswick et al (2000:887) believe dialogue generates learning-- creating and fostering meanings and understanding--. Dialogue also bridges the gap between a lower and higher level of learning that is the individual and organisational learning. In essence, the ability to reach higher levels of knowledge and understanding depends upon one's interaction with other more advanced peers. This unequal interaction fosters learning; and through increased interaction and involvement, organisations are able to extend themselves to learning from different individuals and organisations (Carlton 2012; Tusting and Barton, 2003).

3.2 THE CONCEPT "ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING"

In conceptualizing organisational learning, researchers and practitioners have taken different approaches to understand the subject matter; some view individual learning as synonymous to organisational learning, while others consider the two as distinct processes. Representing the former stance, Hedberg (1981:6) argues that organisations have cognitive systems and memories and not brains. So as individuals develop their personalities, personal habits and beliefs over time, organisations develop their views and ideologies. On a contrary view, Cook and Yanow (1993:378) state that "*what organisations do when they learn is necessarily different from what individuals do when they learn*". Specifically, they believe that organisational learning is not essentially a cognitive activity, because at the very least, organisations lack the typical wherewithal for undertaking cognition. The concept of OL is addressed from individualistic to models of collective sentience, therefore posing the challenge of conceptualizing organisational learning as argued by Antal et al (2001: 921):

"The very definition of organisational learning is subject to controversy and flux. The discussion involved is no sterile academic debate but rather the logical consequence of active participation by scholars from an increasing number of disciplinary and cultural backgrounds, and it is a testimony to the deepening understanding about the complexity of the topic. The inability to come to a consensus may also be a result of heightened sensitivity to the importance of language".

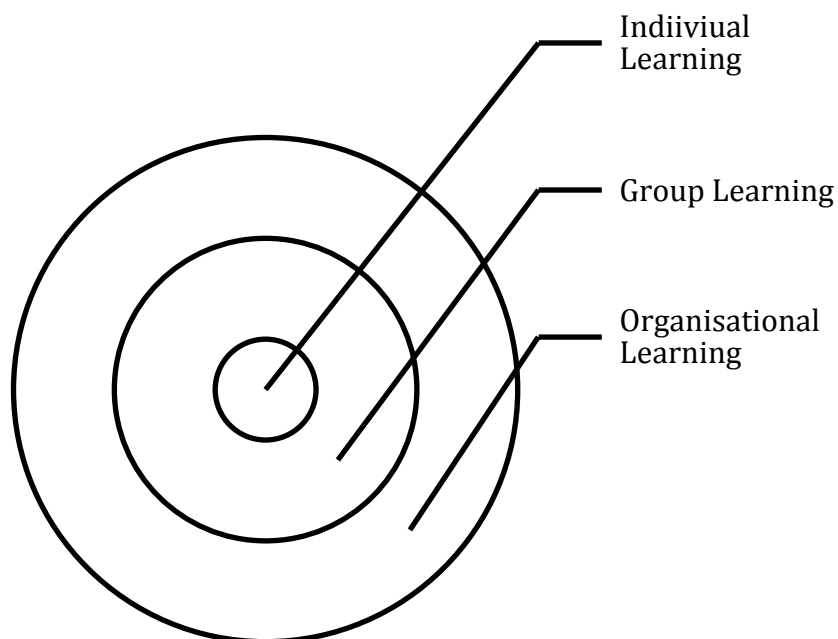
In reducing ongoing controversies on the conceptualization of organisational learning, one has to seek which way of understanding the concept manifests its usefulness and potential; provides an avenue for effective actions or leads to new and better insights. As Popper and Lipshitz (2000) posit that in order to understand organisational learning, researchers must look for attributes that organisations can be meaningfully understood to possess and use. Fiol and Lyles's (1986) distinguished between two forms of learning: individual and organisational learning, where OL goes beyond the sum of individual learning as explained by Hedberg (1981: 6 in Fiol and Lyle 1981:804) *"although organisational learning occurs through individuals, it would be a mistake to conclude that OL is nothing but the cumulative result of their members' learning... members come and go, and leadership changes, but organisations' memories preserve certain behaviours, mental maps, norms, and values over time"*. In situations when knowledge acquired by individuals fail to flow into the organisational actions and procedures, it can be said that learning here is done by organisational members and not the organisation. On the contrary, an organisation may learn more than its individual members because it comprises of well-blended structures, systems, policies and organisational repository capable of processing and storing long-term learnt lessons (Schulz, 2001) over time which are accessible to members but that does not guarantee their learning- because it has to be accessed and absorbed for learning to occur. It can therefore be understood that the organisation has more knowledge than its members in such case. Also, when an organisation represents structures or systems beyond the integration of its members, then learning becomes organisational (Crossan et al 1995). This insight clarifies the difference between individual and organisational learning.

Individual thoughts and actions are understood to yield organisational learning within a favorable setting. In this vein, Kim (1993) identified that individual mental models define how learning takes place in an organisation, while Rook (2013) claims that one way of developing the link between individuals and organisational learning is through understanding "mental maps". *"Mental models are deeply held internal images of how the world works, which have a powerful influence on what and how we do things because they also affect what we see"* (Kim, 1993: 40). Rook explains that mental models are important for *"understanding of the construction of knowledge and the actions of an individual...and organisational learning occurs through individual members [of an*

organisation]” (p39). Learning in organisations however becomes problematic if people (individuals) rely solely on their mental models and the effects of their own actions to inform them on what to do. This shows the line between individual mental models that leads to individual learning which defines how learning in organisations occurs. Forehlich et al (2014) argue that while learning could happen in a deliberate confine structure, it mostly occurs informally in organisations-outside the restriction. Savolainen and Haikonen (2007) argue that survival and success of organisations in the marketplace highly depends on learning, yet most organisations have little understanding of the dynamics of learning and any organisation aspiring to exist in the tough business environment must first resolve the issue of understanding learning. According to Argyris (1990: 177) *“most companies are not only having tremendous difficulty addressing this learning dilemma; they are not even aware that it exists”*.

Antonacopoulou (2006), Crossan et al (1999) and Dasgupta (2012) state that there is consensus that the concept of organisational learning is multi-dimensional and complex and cuts across three levels; the individual, group and organisational level.

Figure 3.1 Levels of Organisational learning



Source: Dasgupta (2012:4)

Dasgupta (2012:5) asserts that *“organisational learning is the accumulation of individual and collective learning”*. Group learning occurs alongside the learning process at the individual level and may occur independently of each individual but cannot exist if the entire members of an organisation are restricted from learning. Organisational learning to Scott (2011: 1) *“is a multilevel process whereby members individually and collectively acquire knowledge by acting together and reflecting together”*. Knowledge acquired or created are applied by individuals, while shared knowledge is combined, expanded, tested and applied amongst individuals to become community knowledge. As that knowledge becomes embedded in organisational features like protocols and strategies, it turns to be part of an organisational context that influences what and how individuals, groups and the organisation learns. Similarly, Higgins and Aspinall (2011) define OL as the process of acquiring, assimilating and applying knowledge within the context of everyday life. Organisational learning in Lipshitz et al (2002:94) view is not a single process performed by an entire organisation in a uniform fashion. Rather it is an assembly of loosely linked sub-processes performed by a wide variety of organisational learning mechanisms, in which different organisational units participate in different ways and at different levels of intensity.

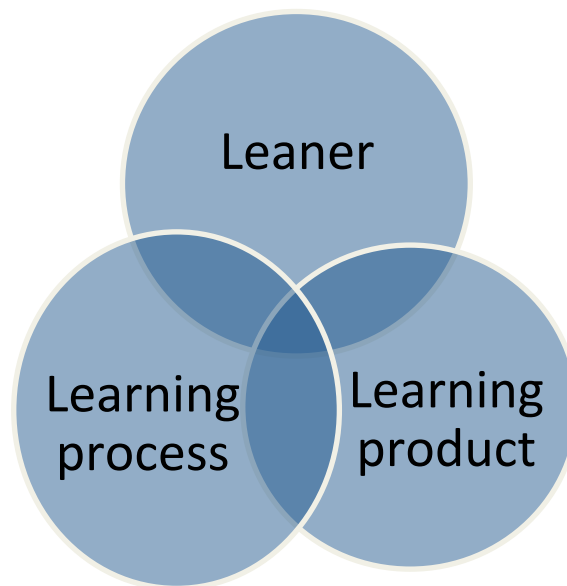
The term ‘organisational learning’ connotes learning as a ‘live metaphor’ that transfers information from the familiar domain (the individual) to a less regarded phenomenon in organisations (the target domain) (Gherardi, 2006). According to Milway and Saxton (2011) organisational learning is tough even when the process is intentional. Conversely, Silberman (2013:1) and Cole (1995:366) consider organisational learning as being simple with great outcomes. Silberman asserts that OL is not complicated, but absolutely stands out when compared to older force forms of learning previously employed in organisations. While to Cole *“organisational learning, even at the simple level ... is a critical issue with strong consequences for productivity and competitiveness”*. Oinas (1999) suggests that ‘organisational learning’ is a term used to describe certain types of activity occurring in organisations. Andreadis (2008) and Suarez-Herrera et al (2009) define OL as intentional process directed towards improving effectiveness in an organisation through change, While Cyert and March (1963: 68) argued that OL *“is not necessarily adaptive or a source of wisdom and improved performance... learning may well yield myths, fictions, folklore and illusions rather than improvement”* because in

learning it is not always obvious what happened, why it happened, or whether what happened is good or not, hence ambiguity. Edmondson (2004) further presents that for organisations to learn and be effective, their leaders need to translate mistakes made into insight and actions that strengthens the organisation's competences and customer's safety. In support of this argument, Carmeli and Sheaffer (2008) and Newberry (2008) added that transformational leaders stimulate creativity and innovation by treating mistakes and failures as opportunities to learn and improve effectively; as they are more concerned about learning to improve organisational performance. Leaders are however, interested in learning about the well-being of the organisation.

Bushe (2009) and Isaacs (1993) consider learning as being rooted in dialogue and social relationship. Where question of what kind of dialogue provide the proper avenue for learning to take place, rather than asking the kind of cognitive and structural processes involved in learning. Interestingly from a different perspective, Cook and Yanow (1993:384) defined OL from a cultural perspective as *"the acquiring, sustaining, and changing, through collective actions, of the meanings embedded in the organisation's cultural artefacts"*. Garratt (1999:202) argues that *"unlike many management ideas, organisational learning is not a fad, but it is increasingly accepted as a vital strategy for organisational survival in a continually changing environment"*. In the same vein, Tsai (2003) tells that OL is a strategic necessity for an organisation and it promotes continuous improvement. But Dodgson (1993) reveals that OL does not often leads to an outcome. One could contribute that learning in organisations may not always favour those involved. Learning may signify a product (something learnt) or the process that results in such a product. The former relates to the accumulation of information in the form of new skill or knowledge, while the latter looks at how the learning activity occurs, rather than what is learnt (Argyris and Schon, 1996; Cook and Brown, 1999). An organisation can be reasoned to learn when it acquires information in the form of knowledge, understanding, skills or practices through the use of mechanisms of any kind. In this light, it is debated that all organisations learn, either for better or worst.

Argyris and Schon (1996) suggested that OL consist of three elements shown below.

Figure 3.2 Elements of Organisational Learning



Adopted from Argyris and Schon (1996:12)

In Figure 3.2, the learner is the agent to whom the learning process is attributed to in or outside the organisation. The learning product is assumed to be some informational content and the learning process can be defined as information acquisition, processing, and storage. They investigated the circumstance under which a learner's thought and actions become distinctly organisational. These conditions are: (a) designing agreed procedures for collective decision making; (b) assign to individual's authority to act on behalf of collective minds; and (c) define boundaries between collective and the other world (Argyris and Schon 1996: 8).

To Dixon (1999:3) organisational learning is *"the intentional use of learning processes at the individual, group and system level to continuously transform the organisation in a direction that is increasingly satisfying to its stakeholders"*. This definition reveals that learning should result in the satisfaction of an organisation's stakeholders and it relies on the use of processes which is the next direction of this chapter. Watkins and Marsick (1996b:4) defined the learning organisation rather than organisational learning, however the conceptualization reflects on the description of OL *"the learning organisation is one that learns continuously and transforms itself... learning a continuous, strategically used-process-integrated with and running parallel to work"* (in Ellinger et al

2002: 7). In turn, organisational learning is the evolution into learning organisations. A major issue of the OL literature as noted by Tsang (1997) is that too many definitions of OL are in place, just as the writers on the subject. And this varies in breadth and depth of ideas covered. Summary of the definition and ideas on organisational learning will be noted in this research, starting with Tsang (1997:97) categorization of OL based on perspective and nature (Table 3.2).

Table 3.1 Definitions and ideas on Organisational Learning

Definitions	Perspectives
<i>"...as the acquiring, sustaining or changing of intersubjective Meanings through the artefactual vehicles of their expression and Transmission and the collective actions of the group"</i> (Cook & Yanow, 1993:384)	Cultural
<i>"OL refers to the process by which the organisational knowledge based is developed and shaped"</i> (Shrivastava, 1981:15)	Cognitive
<i>"An entity learns if, through its processing of information, the range of its potential behaviour is changed"</i> (Huber, 1991: 89)	Cognitive & Behavioural
<i>"By the term 'organisational learning' we mean the changing of organisational behaviour"</i> (Swieringa & Wierdsma, 1992:33)	Behavioural
<i>"... OL must be conceived as including... organisations actively engaging in unending cognitive process, an organisation, as collective forms of coordinated cognition and action, are continuously being transformed"</i> (Nicoline & Mezner, 1995:740)	Social construction
<i>"Organisational learning is considered a key dynamic capability and defined as improvement in performance as a result of Organisational experience"</i> (Balasubramanian, 2011:549).	Behavioural
<i>"learning in organisations involves a dynamic process of knowledge</i>	

creation and transferring it to required units for use,

Situated

resulting in the creation of new knowledge for later transfer and use”

(Kane and Alavi , 2007:796)

“[OL]is the intentional use of collective and individual learning processes to

continuously transform organisational behaviour in a direction that is

Social/Behavioural

increasingly satisfying to its stakeholders” (Britton, 2005:8)

Differently classified, Ortenblad (2002) placed the perspectives on OL into two categories-*functionalistic* and *Interpretive*; this sheds more light on its process, systems and relationship. The functionalistic perspective sees individuals as the agent of learning through which the organisations learn with the existence of flexible structures and a facilitating climate. Learning does not occur through chance, but through the use of mechanisms. Without discipline, organisations fail to learn. According to Popper and Lipshitz (2000) organisational leaders initiate the conditions or mechanisms essential for learning to take place. Authors like Higgins et al (2012), Kim (1993), Pedler (1991) and Shrivastava (1983) support this perspective. According to the interpretive perspective, OL occurs as a social practice. All learning is contextualised, and can rarely be generalised. This means there is no perfect way for organisations to learn. Learning is increasingly perceived as crucial for organisational success with a fair share of empirical evidence (Mat and Razak, 2011). Organisational learning as a concept is broadly used and in relation to concepts like adaptation, routine, learning organisation, learning cycles, learning organisational structures. Additionally, there is a notable focus for learning in the workplace, resulting in tangible outcomes in organisations; aiding in better performance by and in organisations. According to Tippins and Sohi (2003), OL not only improves the performance of an organisation, but also shapes members' capabilities and ability to synthesize with existing and new knowledge.

Based on the above distinctive conceptualizations, useful conclusions drawn include:

1. The Learning in organisations begins with the Individual level

2. All organisations learn using different means
3. Organisations learn at different levels and pace and for different reasons
4. Learning in organisations could be said to be intentional and unintentional.

Dixon's (1999: 4-5) description of learning and work is synonymous with the definition of OL as proposed by other theorists:

"We normally think of learning and work as separate activities... learning is frequently a part of the task itself. Most jobs now require interpreting, analysing and synthesizing information, tasks that were formerly expected only of managers... the term interpretation, analysis and synthesis, which are often used to describe the new work, as aspects of learning; thus learning and work have become synonymous terms. Rather than learn in preparation for work, employees must learn their way out of the work problems they address...the behaviours that define learning and the behaviour that define being productive are one and the same". Similarly, Kuhn and Marsick (2005:45) posit that learning is no longer a side-line activity- *"it is integrated right into the business with the express purpose of building strategic capability at the individual, group and organisational level"*. Along the same line of thought, Lines et al (2011:167) defines organisational learning as the *"development or dissemination of work-based knowledge that is perceived to be useful for improving organisational performance."* In order to leverage this perspective, organisations should and need to identify ways of explaining their learning, the processes and behaviours.

Nature of learning

Cook and Brown (1999) and Brockbank and McGill (2012) argued that learning is active as it entails the learner engaging in activities such as knowledge acquisition, discussion and problem-solving, that promotes the analysis, exchange and evaluation of what is learnt. This process necessitates individuals and organisations to learn, participate and actively put acquired knowledge to practice. Putting learning to practice or what Cook and Brown (1999) referred to as "organisational knowing" is very critical for organisations desiring tangible results from learning, which should reflect certain features that exhibits the nature of learning such as: 1) learners use experience to learn; by experience Ord (2012:61) suggested that it is an invisible process of learning *"when we experience something we act upon it, we do something: then we suffer or undergo the consequences. We do something to the thing and it does something to us in return: such is*

the peculiar combination. The connection of these phrases of experience measures the fruitfulness of experience. Mere activity does not constitute experience". And it is only by testing that the value of an individual's experience in learning comes to light (Rampersad, 2004). 2) Learners construct their learning in a social context through interaction, 3) reflection and consultation broadens knowledge, 4) learning cannot occur in the absence of interaction and conversation, reflection and dialogue (Hussein, 2011). Appreciating the role of conversation in learning, Hurley and Brown (2010: 1) argue that conversations reveal how the collective intelligence of individuals can be made visible-"Conversations are the way workers discover what they know, share it with their colleagues, and in the process create new knowledge for the organisation. In the new economy, conversations are the most important form of work ... so much so that the conversation is the organisation."

3.3 THE PROCESS OF ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING- HOW LEARNING OCCURS 'ORGANISATIONALLY'

Organisational learning is not a simple concept; it involves a variety of concepts, theories, processes and activities as well as some strange realities. To Brockbank and McGill (2012:21) *"there is no science or theory for...learning which embraces all the activities involved in learning. Most of what we do, think feel and believe is learnt, so the field of activities is wide and varied"*. Similarly, Nobre (2007:284) states that organisational learning is difficult because learning refers to life itself- *"to live is to learn and to learn is to interpret, and to interpret is to use symbolic reason to create meaning"*. Therefore, understanding learning at organisational level is very important as it focuses on how meaning is created at this level by the organisation or other learning levels. Dodgson (1993) however, considered OL as an effortless activity, similar to individual learning.

Several Scholars argue organisational learning often begins from individuals or with individual learning. According to Simon (1991: 125) *"all learning takes place inside individual human heads; an organisation learns in only two ways: one, by the learning of its member, or two, by ingesting new members who have knowledge the organisation did not previously have"*. The mechanism for learning, in Simon's view, resides within the

individual. While according to Lines et al (2011: 167-8), organisations learn in two ways: *“by sharing the knowledge that already exists in the organisation and by generating knowledge that is new to the organisation”*. By sharing knowledge, individuals and groups in the organisation become more knowledgeable and are able to improve problem-solving, decision making and performance of the organisation.

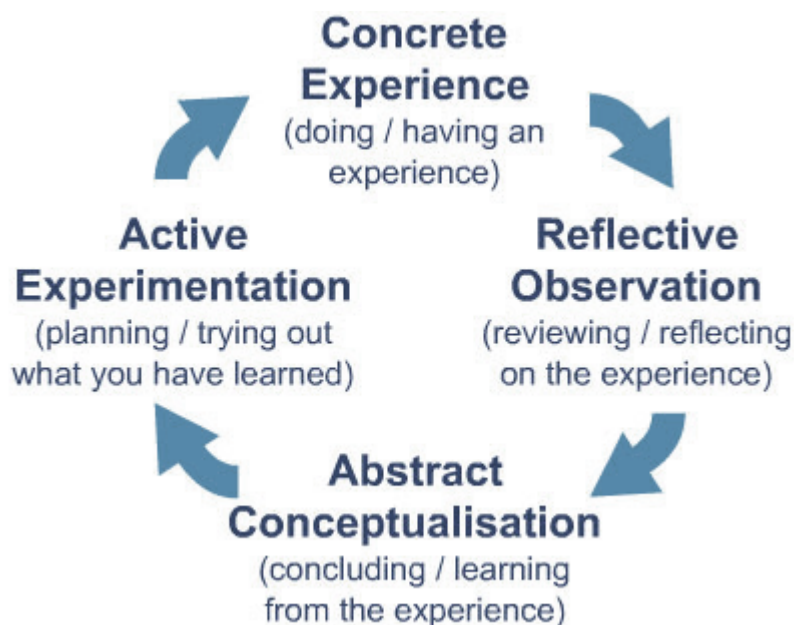
Organisational learning to Starkey (1996) means the creation of useful meaning by individuals, while Van Rossum and Hamer (2010:1) defined individual learning as *“the acquisition of facts, procedures etcetera, which can be retained and utilized in practice”*. This definition reflects similar features with organisational learning as captured by Parvahan and Drechsler (2015) that organisational learning occurs when organisational systems and culture retain knowledge. According to Popper and Lipshitz (2000: 185) Individual learning and organisational learning seems to be similar to an extent because *“they involve the same phases of information processing: namely collection, analysis, abstraction and retention”*. But are different in two aspects: *“information processing is carried out at different systemic levels by different structures, and organisational learning involves an additional phase, dissemination (the transmission of information and knowledge among different persons and organisational units)”*. Furthermore, Anantatmula (2008:303) considers individual learning as a pre-condition to organisational learning which is characterized by *“thinking, personal experience, needs and motives, interests and values, level of difficulty of the task at hand, and manifestation of behavioural changes”*. On the contrary, Wang and Ahmed (2002) argue that individual learning is not the same as organisational learning; and it does not often result to organisational learning. Along the same line, Friedman (2001) contends that individuals only serve as agents of organisational learning and not the sufficient condition, while Corley et al (2011) acknowledged organisational learning is far more than individual and the collective version of individual learning. From a distinct view, Cook and Yanow (1993) argue organisations learn differently from individuals; they learn through organisation acts. These they explained are activities done by groups, which are not and cannot be done by an individual. For instance, an individual basketball player cannot play a game alone, only the several players, together as a team, are able to carry out the team’s strategies, moves and style of play. Individual learning anchors organisational learning but that should not be considered the sufficient

condition. Despite these arguments, it is essential to understand how individuals learn- the process, to facilitate organisational learning.

3.3.1 Individual learning to Organisational Learning Cycles/ Processes

Individual learning according to Kolb (1984) is a lifelong process that revolves around four stages-concrete experience; reflective observation; abstract conceptualization and active experimentation-, translating experience into concepts through reflection. This model suggest learning begins with a “here and now experience” or encounter, which is followed by data collection and observation of/about the experience. Data collected is then analysed and conclusions drawn from the analysis are communicated to actors in the experience for use in the modification of their behaviour and choice of subsequent experiences. The stages of experiential learning are diagrammatically represented below:

Figure 3.3 Kolb’s Learning cycle



From Exeter (2001), Adapted from Kolb (1984:21)

Kolb states that the learning cycle maybe entered into at any point, but the sequence of occurrence must be followed. He argues that individuals get to apply what is newly learnt based on previous experiences and the cycle continues. It means learning and practice here is intentional. With a deep intention to convey how individual experience the world, Argyris and Schon (1978) examined the concept of *mental models* in their

theory of action. The theory claims that people construct knowledge or image in ways that the mind can use it, in order to make it actionable. Aside from being internally held, mental models were understood to affect the way individuals act. According to Rook (2013) *mental models* are important for providing information relating to the structure, relationships and how learning occurs in organisations. This she emphasized, emulates individual learning as the foundation of organisational learning. Dixon (1999: 17) also argued that individual learning is about making sense of an individual's experience; "*We create 'meaning structure' from the data that we encounter in our interaction in the world*". Individuals are seen to create "meaning structures" in their daily activities. By *meaning structures* Baoteng (2011:6) means the "*meaningful links or interpretations drawn from their sensory impressions, which is influenced by numerous factors including genetic factors, context and prior meaning structures from their past*". These structures guide individuals to organize and interpret experiences. Dixon (1999:15) expatiated that meaning structures are the *hallway of learning* and could be created through:

- Verbal transmission- ideas from sources like books, reports and other people's ideas
- Direct experience- the receipt of sensory data, sound and pain
- Reorganisation- what is already known is reorganized to create new meanings.

Organisational learning is said to occur when individual meaning structures are made explicit through dialogue, arguments or negotiations. Shared experiences and ideas allow group members learn from each other and tap knowledge of others. At organisational level, individuals may choose to learn on their own but that knowledge may not be made accessible to other organisational members. It is therefore obvious that meaning structures could either be held privately, shared through dialogue and those held together with other members of the organisation collectively. This is explained in Table 3.3 below:

Table 3.2 Forms of Meaning structures

Meaning structures	Explanation
Private Meaning	An individual's accumulated learning experiences and knowledge about the organisation and from personal effort. Individuals decide not to share their private meaning structures for reasons best known to them. However, the more they are willing to share with other organisational members, the more the organisation is able to learn.
Accessible Meaning	As the word implies, these are the meaning structures individuals share or are willing to make known to others in the organisation. It is comparable to the mechanisms of the organisation where exchange occurs and ideas get tested against other's way of thinking. When these meaning structures are made available to people then the data source is challenged. Hallways or mechanisms are domains where collective meaning is made and constructed.
Collective Meaning	This is the common shared meaning held by organisational members. It can be reflected in the norms, strategies and assumptions of how work gets done. It could also be codified in processes and policies. Shared meaning is like having a storeroom where organisational memories are stored. It is the history of the organisation that binds organisational member together- just like glue-, providing a sense of belonging and it saves the organisation's time. But, when it inhibits learning or becomes obsolete, it can have a negative effect on the organisation.

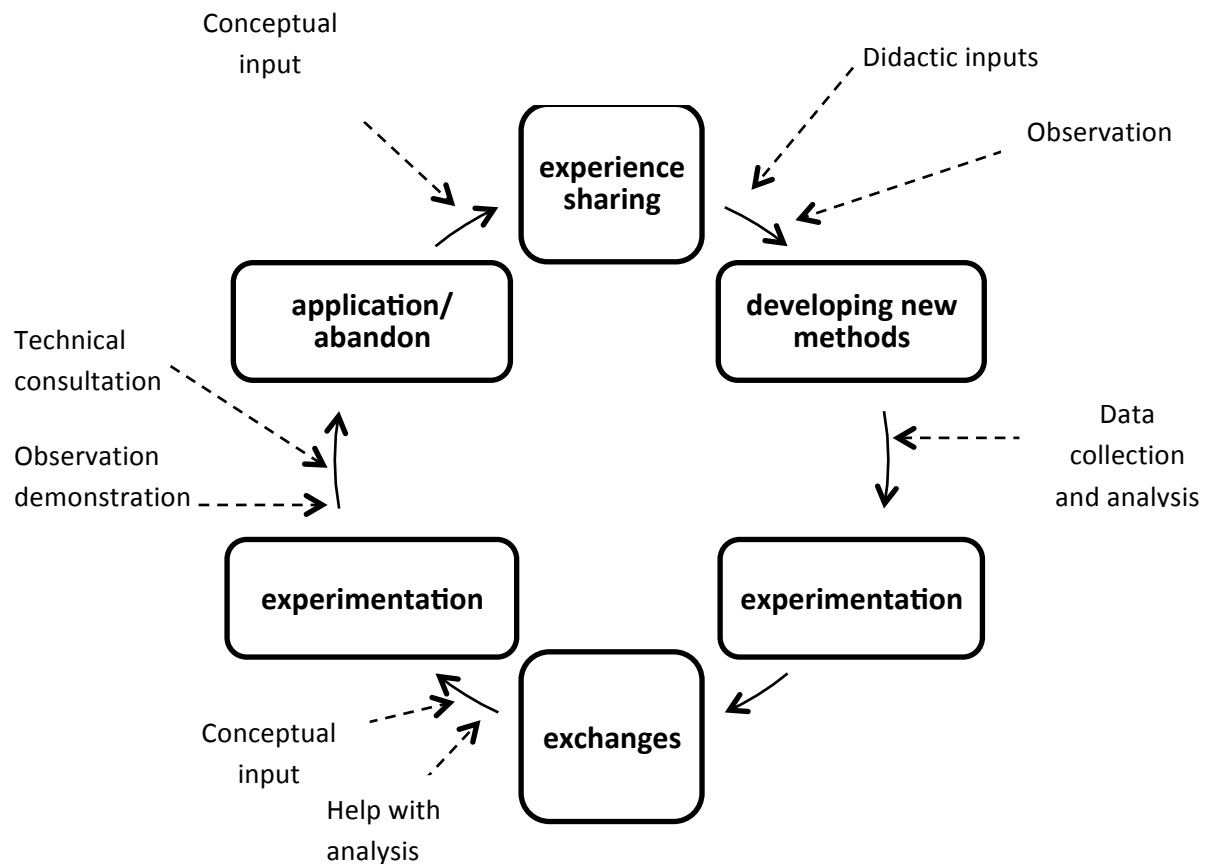
Source: Dixon (1999:44-49)

The explanation clarifies the relationship between individual, group and organisational learning stressing that the removal of barriers between the three meaning structures leads to shared meaning, which results in organisational learning. The existence of the above meaning structures and mechanisms are what tends to differentiate individual learning from organisational learning as argued by Dixon. Graham and Nafukho

(2008:9) assert that in understanding how organisations learn, it is relevant to identify key learning systems or mechanisms within the organisation, *“the literature repeatedly reflects these as not only valuable, but also essential to the learning organisation”*.

Huberman (1995a) proposed four progressive cycles of learning. *The closed individual cycle* relates to the private individual learning usually done in a formal manner. *The open individual cycle* is where an individual seek assistance from peers and colleagues in an organisation. *The closed collective cycle* involves the coming together of organisational members from different units with shared interests to form a group where experiences are shared, criticism occurs and learning takes place. This group relies on its collective wisdom which may or may not be sufficient to promote higher level of learning. Finally, *the open collective cycle* employs other individuals who may not directly share same interest with the group members but possess skills and knowledge capable of complementing practical knowledge held by other members of the group. This cycle permits external parties and experts to contribute to the learning in the organisation (Day, 1999).

Figure: 3.4 Open collective cycle



Huberman 1995 adopted from Day (1999:193)

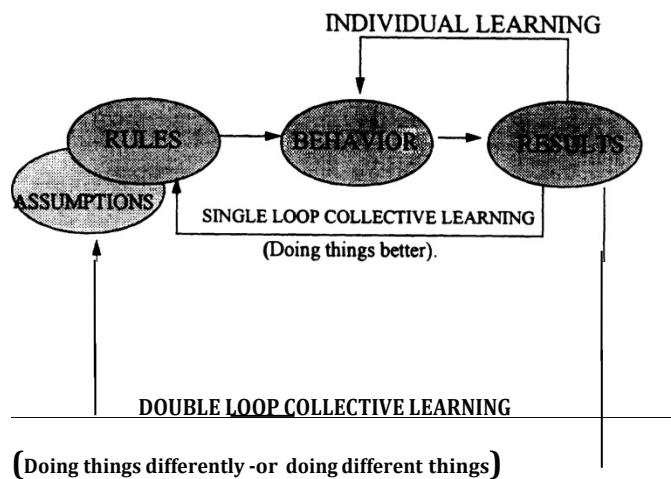
To Huberman (1995a: 207) if an organisation is to learn, collaboration is necessary, and this is not limited to one group but opened to admit other groups and external parties to its membership in the knowledge that:

- Conceptual input: this is a process of conceptualizing, challenging diverse perspectives of knowledge to enhance joint construction of knowledge through conversation.
- Didactic inputs: enables the experimentation and application of learning into practice.
- Data collection and analysis are vital if existing practices are to be reviewed and new practices introduced.

According to Hayes and Allison (1998), organisational learning begins with an individual's cognitive style (the preferred way of gathering, processing and evaluation),

how they guide their interpretation into theories and models that guide their actions personally and at work. The cognitive style influences collective learning, a process through which individuals in an organisation create shared mental model for examining and challenging their experiences, leading to the modification in the rules that regulates behaviour in organisations. Figure 3.4 shows how an organisation learns:

Figure 3.5 Organisational Learning



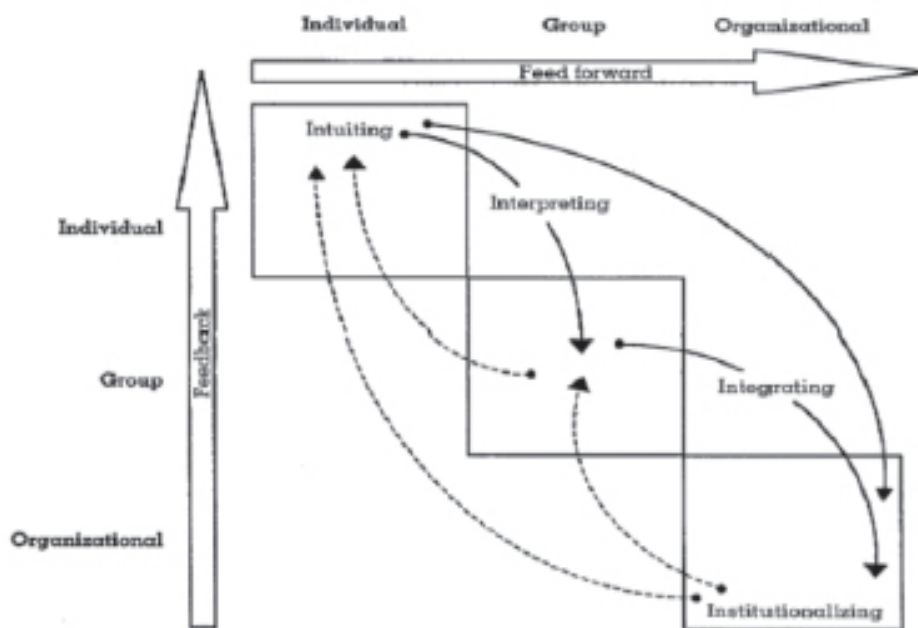
Source: Hayes and Allison (1998:849)

Sanchez (2005:15) describes organisational learning as *“a collective sense making process that follows an identifiable progression of cognitive activities”*. The cycle begins with individuals identifying potential significant events for the organisation, and then seeks to make sense of those events by applying their interpretive frameworks, and finally respond to meanings derived from events by modifying or forming new reasons about the world and the position of the organisation in the world. Nicolini and Meznar (1995) recognised the ‘organisation’s cognitive posture’ as the internal ideologies and patterns that form organisation culture. They argued that *“strategy produces stress which requires adaptation and produces learning, the very process of formulating and implementing strategy is said to foster knowledge acquisition”* (p730-731). This implies that learning is suggested as a platform for creating meaning that leads to action, and learning could be the result of strategic actions as argued by Lant and Milliken (1992) that the need to maintain an alignment between organisation’s strategy and other elements of its design pilot’s orientation and learning. Aside from meaning being the

underlying motivation behind thoughts and interpretation that leads to learning, organisational components drive learning also.

To Bushe (2009:21), the phrase 'organisational learning' has to refer to something beyond simple individual learning inside an organisation for it to be useful. Organisations learn through mutual relationship with its members. March (1991) argues that organisations embed knowledge in their routines, rules, norms, procedures and forms, learnt overtime from their members. At the same time, individuals in an organisation are socialised to organisational beliefs and values. With regards to 'who' learns in organisational learning, some authors favour a multi-level perspective, relating individual, group and organisation (Antonacopoulou 2006; Crossan et al 1999). Different social perspectives on the multi-unit debate have also been highlighted in order to provide the level analysis of OL in work settings. The "theory of situated learning" (Lave & Wenger 1991; Lervik et al 2010) emphasises the interaction between individuals in the course of work and the theory of "communities of Practice" (Brown & Duguid 1991; Handley et al 2006) which stress the role of social relationship in learning are some examples. Crossan et al (1999) argue organisational learning is a multi-level process. The process begins with individual level learning, that progresses to group level and then to organisational level. The three levels are related by sub-processes- intuiting, interpreting, integrating and institutionalizing- that involves the creation and application of knowledge (Lawrence et al, 2005).

Figure 3.6 Dynamic process of Organisational Learning



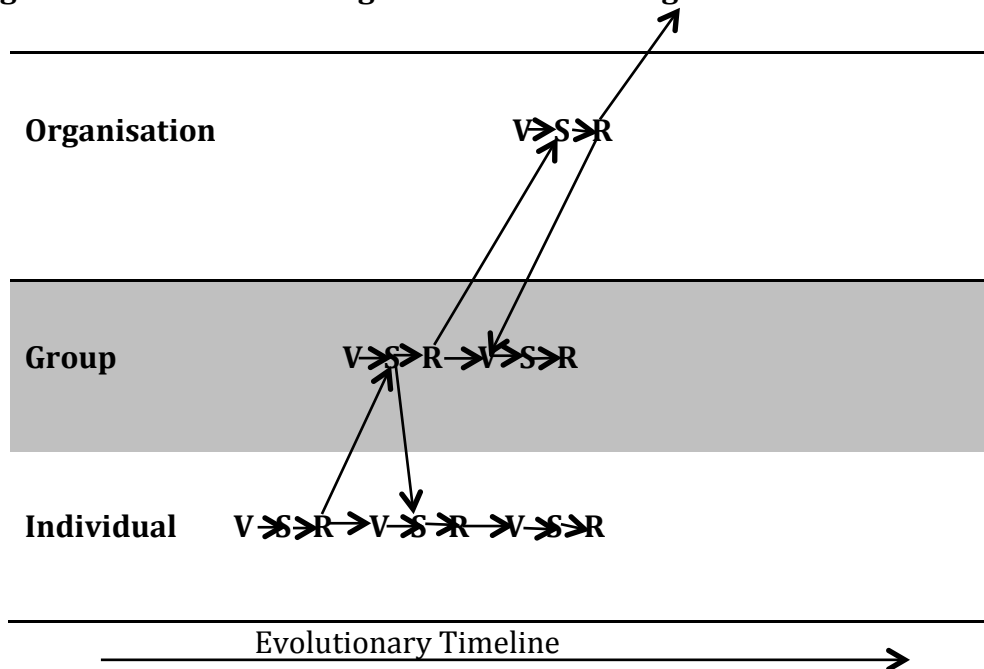
Source: Crossan et al (1999:532)

Intuiting is “the preconscious recognition of the pattern and/ or possibilities inherent in a personal stream of experience” (Crossan et al 1999:525). Intuiting is the function of individual level; individuals create mental models based on their experiences and translate these models into metaphors that guide their communication and actions. *Interpreting* involves the explanation of an individual’s ideas to one’s self and others through words and actions. Interpreting begins at individual level and further includes others through dialogue; making ideas explicit (Greenwood and Sommerville, 2011). *Integrating* is “the process of developing shared understanding among individuals and of taking coordinated action through mutual adjustments” (Crossan et al 1999:525). This is the first process that occurs at group level with the focus of achieving collective action. *Institutionalizing* is the final process that captures learning that has occurred among individual and group levels into the organisation through mechanisms such as structures, systems, procedures and strategy. This process differentiates OL from individual and group learning because through institutionalizing, ideas and lessons become organisational and independent of their origin; and are made available for use on ongoing basis by organisational members (Lawrence et al 2005). Jones and Macpherson (2006) and Jenkin (2013) extended the 4I model by including two processes: *Intertwining* and *Information Foraging*. Intertwining is the active

engagement between organisations and external knowledge networks. Learning in this case, not only occurs within organisations but cuts across organisational boundaries (Jones and Macpherson, 2006:168). To Jenkins (2013:100), OL starts with information foraging and it is linked with the individual learning process of intuiting. Jenkin argues *“To initiate information foraging, a goal must be articulated even if it is exploratory and vague in nature”* (ibid: 100). In order to guide the foraging process, individuals become developed through intuitive and inductive processes.

Argyris and Schon (1978) identified three forms of organisational learning; single-loop, double-loop and deuteron learning; single-loop learning is the detection and corrections of misalignment, double-loop learning advances beyond error detection and correction to the transformation of organisational overall rules, and triple-loop learning occurs after an organisation understands the processes of single and double loop learning. Similarly, Crossan et al (2013) contend that learning occurs at three levels and is seen as a two-way process- transfer from individuals to the organisation and vice versa, which happens at different levels as represented below:

Figure 3.7 Crossan et al Organisational Learning Process



Source: Crossan et al (2013: 23)

Table 3.3 Process of organisation learning

Learning Process	Meaning
Variation	Useful analytical starting point for understanding evolution-a shift from organisational tradition
Selection	Internal organisational structuring, conformity to institutionalised norms and other forces
Retention	Institutionalization of practices in cultural beliefs and values

Source: Crossan et al (2013: 6-7)

Here, organisational learning involves the process of handling variations, selections and retention pressures (VSR) which represents Argyris and Schon's three forms of learning. Understanding these patterns entails the consideration of mechanisms operating between and within the individual, group and organisational levels. They argued that retaining previous experience and learning is a strategic goal of the organisation, and acts as a key replicator. The replicator exerts selection pressure on the behaviour and routine of the group- a variation created at a lower level. Conversely, retained learning at the group level acts as a selection pressure on the variation of individual learning. The individual produces elemental structures (the combination of affective, behavioural and cognitive material), making them experience the VSR cycle overtime, thereby creating new variations and the process repeats upwards- *"individuals introduce new variations to others and this upward process creates the next higher level, the group...then retained material at the group level creates the next level of analysis-the organisation level"* (ibid: 8). The process includes both bottom-up and top-down forces that leads to feed forward and feedback learning.

No doubt, individuals learn on behalf of their organisation, serve as agents and anchor organisational learning. Individuals intuit and interpret for learning to occur at the organisational level because the organisation does not exhibit such human traits. The learning gets stored in the organisational memory through the use of operations instruction, procedures and manuals. Hence the stored knowledge becomes the item of the organisation which can be utilised by individuals as well (Crossan et al 1999). Ribbens (1997: 65) claims that the most appropriate way of analysing how an

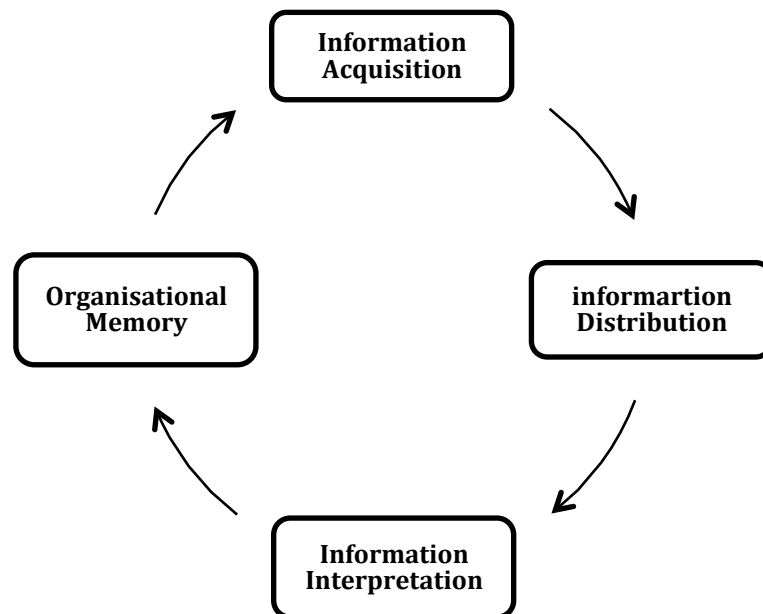
organisation learns is to examine its information processing base- the process by which an organisation acquires, distributes, interprets and stores information because the organisational knowledge base is the result of organisational learning.

Huber/ DiBella et al's process model of Organisational learning

Huber's (1991) and DiBella et al (1996) organisational learning process has incorporated many other learning cycles such as Kolb (1984), Argyris and Schon's model and Klein (1989) with links to Dixon's cycle, 4I and 5Is of organisational learning model and others. The four-step cycle includes: 1) information acquisition, 2) information distribution, 3) information interpretation; and 4) organisational memory. An organisation can be said to be learning if its members are learning in different ways while collaborating with each other to ensure that their actions are aligned for the good of the organisation as a whole. This learning is a process. It involves series of linked activities which are repeated as suggested by DiBella et al and Huber's learning process. However, learning becomes organisational when information is shared, stored in organisational memory in such a way that it may be transmitted, accessed, and used for organisational goals (Huber, 1991:89). Same with Beccerra-Fernandez and Sabherwal's (2008) representation of organisational learning- as a process whereby tacit knowledge is codified and articulated and explicit knowledge is absorbed from where individuals acquire new insights, abilities, and experiences and get to share their learnings with other organisational members for organisational purposes.

DiBella et al (1996) and Huber's (1991) model stands as one of the most popular and cited in organisational learning literature. It is the result of a critical examination of learning of organisations which is broader in the scope of its subject matter. The model involves four stages integrally linked.

Figure 3.8 Huber's / DiBella et al learning process



Huber 1991: adopted from De weerd-Nederhof et al (2002:329)

Information acquisition- This is the process by which information is acquired. It involves developing new content or tapping into other contents or replacing existing content within the organisational knowledge. Through individual, social, and collaborative processes, information is acquired, shared, enlarged and justified in organisational settings (Schechter and Mowafaq, 2013: 510). According to Schein (1992) individuals acquire information that builds their knowledge base and that of the organisation. Huber (1991) views information acquisition as involving an interplay between sub processes- This includes inherited knowledge from organisational members (congenital learning), learning from organisational experience (experiential learning), learning from other organisations (vicarious learning), learning from newly-employed organisational members (grafting) and searching and noticing the environment, and a growing spiral flow as information moves through individual, group and organisational levels (Huber, 1991:97).

Congenital learning: organisations often begin their lives with some form of existing knowledge. The founder(s) of an organisation possess knowledge about the new organisation's initial environment and processes the organisation can use to work towards its creator's intentions, and they make this knowledge available to the

members of the new organisation, this form of knowledge impacts heavily on the strategy of the organisation (Bruneel et al 2010). Cook and Yanow (1993) however, dispute this notion that an *“organisation is not born with knowledge, it had to learn it”*. Each organisation has to learn how to fulfil its purpose, individually and collectively. To Huber (1991), the nature of an organisation and what it knows at birth is influenced by the experience of the founder, and this determines what it searches for, what it experiences and how it interprets situations. In essence, congenital learning strongly influences future learning in an organisation. On the contrary, Robey et al (2000:125) argue that *“learning is enhanced through systems that support communication and discourse; and that information technologies have the potential to both enable and disable organisational learning”*. Revealing that other systems contribute to the influence and congenital knowledge does not stand as the substantial influence in this case.

Experimental learning: after birth, organisations broaden their knowledge base through experience. Learning from experience mostly arises as a result of internal systematic efforts. Adams et al (2005b: 333) posit, to learn from experience, *“individuals must create a conversational space where members can reflect on and talk about their experience together”*. This makes learning intentional and what is shared becomes the guide that enables individuals to learn and shape their thinking and actions to respond to the challenges of its mission and environment. Also learning becomes intentional when there is an increase in the accuracy of feedback about cause-effect relationship between organisational actions and results (DiBella et al 1996; Huber, 1991). Less arranged forms of experiential learning include accidental or unintentional learning. Barrett (1998) acknowledged improvisation as a form of unintentional learning. Organisational members often jump into actions without clear plans, making up reasons as they proceed, and discovering their true purpose as they journey through. He claims improvisation is attractive because of its freshness, quality which can only be obtained and experienced by improvisation. Another form of experimental learning is **vicarious learning**. Organisations do attempt to learn about strategies, practices and activities of other organisations. They search for information about what their competitors or similar organisations do and how they do it (Deegan & Unerman, 2011). This is usually done through the use of consultants, suppliers, and also accessing materials and publications of these companies. Mezian and Eisner (1999) holds that a significant number of organisations continuously imitate other organisations because it helps them

become homogenous and survive under broad sets of conditions. Imitation provides an efficient channel through which experience can be transmitted from one individual to another or from an organisation to another (Sanditov, 2006). DiBella et al (1996) identifies that organisations also learn from experience through joint venture with other organisations so their information processing is made robust through the sharing of diverse resources.

Grafting: the acquisition of new members who possess knowledge not previously available into an organisation often increases the knowledge of the organisation (Huber, 1991). The acquisition of a firm by another is an example of a large scale grafting where carriers of new knowledge are absorbed as a whole into another system (Vermeulen and Barkema, 2001). Joint ventures and alliances to Inkpen and Crossan (1995) and Berrell et al (2002) provide platforms for organisations to learn, giving them access to information, skills and capabilities of their partners not previously possessed.

Searching and noticing: organisations acquire information through wide-ranging sensing of their internal and external environments. Environmental scanning *“is the acquisition and use of information about events, trends and relationships in an organisation’s external environment, the knowledge of which would assist management in planning the organisation’s future course of action”* (Choo, 2001:1-2). Organisations examine their environments in order to identify the forces at play so that effective measures and responses may be developed to manage the interference of environmental forces with organisational existence (Pugh and Hickson, 2007). Organisation’s environments evolve. If the fit between an organisation and its environment becomes too great (dispersed), it leads to either organisation’s failure, inability to survive or a costly transformation. In recognition of this, organisations search and acquire information about changes and their operations (Hayes, 2002). Noticing is the *“unintentional acquisition of information about the organisation’s external environment, internal conditions, or performance”* (Huber, 1991:97). Noticing therefore occurs as an emergent strategy of acquiring information in organisations.

Information distribution- the process by which information acquired from different sources is shared, thereby leading to understanding in the organisation. This stage is of great importance in the learning process. Only through distribution does the aim of learning become evident in one’s interpretation and use of distributed information. Just

as Popper and Lipshitz (2000) advocate that it is only when information is distributed that it becomes organisational; thus 'sharing' defines the ultimate basis of organisational learning and what differentiates organisational learning from individual learning (Castaneda and Rios, 2007).

Information distribution occurs at different levels: between individuals, from individuals to explicit sources, from individuals to groups, across groups, and from the group to the organisation. Dixon (1992) identified intentional and unintentional distribution as the two sub processes of information distribution not captured in Huber's model. Intentional process captures the individual and group written and verbal means by which organisations deliberately utilise in communication, classified by Garvin (1993) as written and visual information mechanisms and instruction and training programmes. Examples of these are memos, reports, formal courses, on the job training, print, videos. Unintentional process on the other hand, ranges from informal to formal distribution practices that are employed incidentally through media like job rotation, informal networks, stories and myths. Furthermore, Garvin (1993) presents company visit as another mechanism that supports information distribution as oppose a sub process of information acquisition as seen in the model. Huber (1991: 101) indicates that information distribution results to a more broadly based organisational learning as opposed new organisational learning. However, this is not a simple process in that organisations often do not know when they learn and possess weak systems for locating knowledge residing in them. Conversely, Buchel and Raub (2003), Holt et al (2013); Louadi and Tounsi (2010) argue that not all distributed information leads to organisational learning but capable of drawing the attention of organisational members to matters, creating awareness and cognitive modification at individual level without exceeding beyond that level. Communication mechanisms and symmetric systems therefore drive the distribution of information (Argote and Ingram 2000).

Information interpretation-the process by which shared information gains one or more commonly shared meanings. Organisations continually compare actual to expected outcomes to update their memory (Zollo and Winter, 2002: 342). Unexpected outcomes must be assessed for causation or new ways of action specified in order to increase the level of learning. This stage forms a major debate in the learning process. Some research insist that all that is needed for learning to occur is the expansion of the

knowledge base or change in understanding, and not necessarily change in action. While others argue that unless actions change, learning has not occurred. However, to Huber, *"it seems reasonable to conclude that more learning has occurred when more and more varied interpretations have been developed, because such development changes the range of the organisation's potential behaviours, and this is congruent with the definition of learning"* (p102). To Daft and Weick (1984) understanding of information interpretation *"giving meaning to information and developing shared understanding"*, which means that organisational learning occurs only when meaning held and shared goes beyond individual level. It can therefore be argued that only when individuals or organisational units share commonly held meanings that organisational learning is said to occur; no matter the variation in interpretation, aside that it can be considered solely individual.

Information interpretation consists of sub-processes- cognitive maps and framing, media richness, information overload and unlearning. **Cognitive maps** function synonymously with mental models. Cognitive maps vary across organisational units; having different responsibilities, and they shape the interpretation of individuals by individuals. To this end, Pettigrew et al (2002:169) assert that individuals rely on their cultural and educational background in framing their cognitive maps regarding information processing and events. Difference in culture can influence information interpretation because members of the same culture orientation consider their views superior while ignoring the culture of the organisation itself. Mathieu et al (2000) also argue that how information is framed affects its interpretation- if information is uniformly framed when distributed to organisational units, common interpretations are likely to be achieved. While Zhang and Buda (1999:2) points that *"framing may not be uniform in all conditions and can be moderated by other factors"*. This is because it is impossible to account for all context differences and effects such as modes of information presentation, response modes, verbal labels and other associated variables.

Media richness determines the extent to which information is given common meaning in an organisation. This, Dixon (1999) referred to as collective meaning, where all organisational members are bound together by shared knowledge, learning and experiences. Bettis-outland (2012:814) argues **information overload** *"occurs when information received becomes a hindrance rather than a help when the information is*

potentially useful". This leads to ineffective interpretation of acquired information. Organisations in such situations must unlearn in order to absorb or learn more. To Putman and Fairhurst (2001) information can also be filtered to reduce overload. Information filtration here is not based on measurement or other criteria but basically on cognition, as *"frames also function as filters for shaping what is noticed, how it should be managed, and how events should be categorized"* (Putman and Fairhurst, 2001:89). Ali et al (2007: 795) argue that knowledge that becomes obsolete must be renewed for the organisation to function properly and this renewing activity they referred to as **'unlearning'**, and emphasised that *"the inability to unlearn is a critical weakness of many organisations"*. Just as organisations try to learn, they have the responsibility of discarding some outdated or less relevant knowledge. Tsang (2005: 2) defines *unlearning* as a process through which knowledge is discarded, and maintains that the aim of unlearning is to make way for new responses and mental maps. Unlearning occurs when the learner concentrates on learning something new, in that process, what is already known is modified and in some cases lost in order for new frames to be formed (Windeknecht and Delahaye, 2004). Tsang and Zahra (2008) stressed that when an organisation decides to unlearn, it discards existing routine and replaces it with another. This change requires corresponding adjustments of work practices by the organisation and its members. But when organisational members continually apply old routines, it becomes obvious that old ways have not been successfully discarded. While unlearning at the organisational level requires unlearning at the individual level that might not be the case when it comes to individual unlearning. Unlearning at individual learning can be explained as when an individual becomes aware that certain knowledge he or she possesses becomes less useful (Tsang, 2008).

Organisational memory- involves the process of storing mental and structural artefacts for future use. While organisations learn, they also lose track of acquired knowledge (forget). Organisations possess sound holding environments of past experience and knowledge. This holding environment is referred to as organisational memory (Argyris and Schon, 1996). The repository of organisations are varied, as *"inferences drawn from experience are recorded in documents, accounts, files, standards, operating procedures, and rulebooks; in the social and physical geography of organisational structures and relationships; in standards of good professional practice; in*

the culture of organisational stories; and in shared perceptions of the way we do things around here" (March, 1999:83). The organisational memory constitutes a relevant aspect of the learning process. It includes knowledge which resides in various component forms, including routines, structure information stored in e-database, documented procedures, written documentations, codified human knowledge stored in expert systems (Swift and Hwang, 2008:77). Hanson (2001) explained that organisational memory consists of hard and soft knowledge. Hard knowledge is often stored as rules, policies, routines, processes, and is considerably less vulnerable. Soft knowledge in turn, is basically found in documents and people, it can be formal or informal, and is usually transmitted through processes like training, imitation and socialization. Organisational memory is defined "*as the means by which knowledge from past experiences and events influence present organisational activities*" (Stein & Zwass, 1995:85). Organisational memory extends beyond that of an individual to include components such as organisational culture, ecology and structure.

Although the above stages are listed in sequential order, learning could happen as a dynamical process. The organisational learning process introduced by Huber does not only capture the four steps but incorporates the source (s) of each level; the same process has been empirically tested in six family firms by Kars-Ünlüoğlu and Easterby-Smith (2011) and in four private companies by DiBella et al (1996) but it is still limited in scope. While the above process of OL is cyclical, it never goes linearly smooth because of the presence of certain elements shaping the process which could be specific or external to the organisation (Pavesi, 2005) - what then are the elements shaping organisational learning? Huber and DiBella et al identified the stages/processes of organisational learning through information processing at the individual, group and organisational level. But the question of how individual or group learning of organisational members becomes organisational is being criticized and remains unanswered by existing studies. The learning process above explains how organisational members acquire, share, interpret and store information but mechanisms that transfers individual learning to organisational learning is found to require further empirical work (De weerd-Nederhof et al, 2002; Unluoglu & Easterby-Smith, 2011). Also elements shaping OL at each stage of the learning process are likely

to exist in every organisation but limited research on such elements have been identified.

Social/situated view of learning

The social realm of learning contributes that the learner does not require a defined structure to learn, but must be part of a community in practice in order to learn. According to Wang (1995), people learn by observing and practising what is learnt from others. This helps the learner create a better understanding and the opportunity of experiencing the consequences of people's behaviour, that guides learners' actions on decisions. While, Higgins (2013) and Hong and Easterby-Smith (2002:5) argue that learning is a situated activity. Learning is consistently shaped and re-shaped through the dynamic interplay between context, actions and actors and consequences are inseparable from surrounding materials, symbolic and social environment in which it takes place.

The need for systematic learning

Shrivastava (1983: 17) argues that an organisation could access learning through the use of learning systems, organisational learning systems are *"systems which acquire, communicate and interpret organisationally relevant knowledge for use in decision making. They attempt to objectify the subjective personal knowledge of individual members into an organisational knowledge"*. These systems are considered as grounds for improvement. Bushe (1987) reasoned that for an organisation to continue to improve, it has to deploy the use of parallel learning structures (PLS) designed to fit the unique purpose and situations of the organisation. While to Popper and Lipshitz (2000), for understanding on how organisations learn, there is need to sort for mechanisms that enable them process information and learn. Similarly, Schechter and Atarchi (2014:602), Schechter and Feldman (2010) support the need for the existence of and the capacity for systemic learning through institutionalised structures and procedures in organisations. This will be the next focus of this research.

3.4 ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING MECHANISMS (OLMs)

For organisational learning to be better understood, there must be roles, functions and procedures that enable organisational members manage information-i.e. collect,

analyse, store, disseminate and use information, relevant to them and the organisation as a whole. Popper and Lipshitz (1998) proposed that in order for organisations to learn, they must have in place *non-metaphorical analogues* which they termed 'organisational learning mechanisms (OLMs)'. OLMs *"are observable organisational subsystems in which organisational members interact for the purpose of learning"* (Lipshitz et al, 2002:82). Put differently, they are structural and procedural arrangements enabling organisations to acquire, analyse, disseminate, and use and store knowledge that is relevant to the organisation. OLMs on one hand are organisational level processes. On the other, they are social arenas where individual experiences and knowledge are shared with and analysed by other organisational members. The experience and knowledge then becomes that of the entire organisation through dissemination to relevant units or through changes in operating procedures (Popper & Lipshitz, 2000:185). In essence, OLMs foster virtual contact between organisational members, stimulating the collective development of new insight, exchange of knowledge and providing the access to useful documents (Cirella et al. 2016). Kar-Unluoglu and Easterby-Smith (2011:7) argue that in order to be classified as OLMs, an organisational structure should provide an avenue or the means for aiding information acquisition and exchange which will lead to modification and transfer of individual learning to the organisational level. Organisational members should therefore be encouraged to invest effort in developing institutionalized OLMs aiming to develop and revise their knowledge and capabilities by facilitating information collection and elaboration, or by intensifying processes of information distribution, storage and retrieval (Lipshitz et al 2002). To Ghoshal (1987:432), for an organisation to explore its potential, *"it must consider learning as an explicit objective, and must create mechanisms and systems for such learning to take place. In the absence of explicit intention and appropriate mechanisms, the learning potential may be lost"*.

Popper and Lipshitz (2000: 185) further classified OLMs based on when and by whom they are operated. The question, "who does the learning (agent)? Considers who collects and analyses information and disseminates learning. While the question of when and where does learning take place, relative to task performance? Addresses the extent to which learning (information processing) occurs away or in conjunction with work (Lipshitz et al 2007). This classification yields four basic types of OLMs: integrated, non-

integrated, designated and dual-purpose OLMs. An OLM is termed ***integrated*** if organisational members (operators and clients) who are responsible for generating and applying lessons learned respectively are identical. Team meeting devoted to analysing problems in formal regulations is an example of an integrated mechanism for data analysis. Integrated mechanism is often widely accepted and less resisted by team members because it enables participation in learning and decision making process (Edmondson, 2002). If operators and clients are not alike the OLM is ***non-integrated***. Although such mechanisms clearly process information- collect, analyse, disseminate, store and retrieve- relevant to the operation of the organisation, they are operated by special staff (top management) and units on behalf and for the benefit of the organisation. The activities of a risk management department in data collection and analysis, and the preparation of reports for organisational management are examples of a non-integrated mechanism. In ***designated mechanisms***, learning takes place away from task performance. Designated mechanisms are also considered as “offline/internal OLMs” by Lipshitz et al (2007); these OLMs are predicated on two principles. Firstly, organisations accumulate knowledge directly relevant to their operation which they benefit from through reflection on past experience either by organisational members, or units. Secondly, reflection is best carried out by the same client who participated in the learning or action (information processing) because they are responsible for the implementation of lessons learned. This form of OLM is disadvantaged because individuals operating the OLMs may be subject to pressure to cover up errors and failures since they operate on behalf of the organisation.

Dual-purpose mechanisms are mechanisms in which learning is carried out in conjunction with task performance. This form of OLM Lipshitz et al (2007) termed “online/internal OLM” where learning and working here are fused together; in essence task performance becomes an OLM. Learning materializes through the operation of these mechanisms when work or organisational practices produce changes in organisational routines, operating procedures, behaviour or norms. Similar to Schon’ (1983) “reflection in action” this is the skills possessed by proficient practitioners which makes them capable of combining action with critical reflection while in action. Non-integrated and designated OLMs are the lowest and easiest mechanisms to operate as learning is assigned to special staff and units away from core functions of the

organisation. Whereas, at the highest and most difficult levels (integrated and dual-purpose), learning and task performance are indistinguishable and organisational members are continuously engaged in learning, assisting others to learn and sharing their learning and experience with others (Popper and Lipshitz, 1998). Drach-Zahavy and Pud (2010) further identified two types of mechanisms that mediate learning from medication administration error. **Supervisory mechanism** encompasses the features of integrated and non-integrated mechanisms. They assert that supervisory mechanism is integrated because it is being operated at a lower level (ward level) but mostly operated by managers (making it non-integrated), who take full responsibilities of data collection, analysis, making conclusions and implementation. **Patchy mechanisms** are less structured learning mechanisms for information processing that promote limited knowledge dissemination and collective insight or change. Lipshitz et al (2007) identified certain principles associated with OLMs. Firstly, they acknowledge that OLMs can be both formal and informal organisational entities, but the common denominator of both formal and informal OLM is that they are institutionalised features of the organisation. Secondly, there are no universal hard rules in designing, operating and implementing OLMs. Rather two guidelines to note: OLMs to be designed and implemented should suit the need and circumstances of the organisation; and the organisation should consider replicating OLMs by surveying existing OLMs and selecting those that can be replicated in other units of the organisation. Thirdly, it is relevant to remember that OLMs are subject to trial and error. And the beauty of organisational learning is that “the process is the product”. In essence the ability of organisations to learn how to design and operate OLMs in their setting is already a step towards engaging in organisational learning.

Table 3.4 Organisational Learning Mechanisms

Organisational Learning Mechanisms	Basis of Operation
Integrated	Operators and clients are same
Non-integrated	Operators and clients are not same
Designated	Operated away from task performance
Dual-purpose	Operated in conjunction with task performance
Supervisory	Operators and clients could be indifferent

Patchy	Limited in operation
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OLMs range from social organisational arrangements like meetings and trainings to physical objects like suggestion boxes to reports (Kar-Unluoglu & Easterby-Smith, 2011). Cirella et al (2016: 3) also stressed that learning mechanisms include a wide variety of elements. These elements include *“entities that act as enablers in accessing information, such as colleagues, suitable organisational spaces, centres of competency, functions that support learning programmes”*. Furthermore, learning mechanisms include the flow of information both within and outside the organisation. These mechanisms however, are sometimes not labelled OLMs explicitly. Miric et al (2013: 15) used the term “coordination” to explain active learning mechanisms that enable learning in alliances. They differentiated between institutional (formal) and behavioural (informal) mechanisms of coordination. Institutional coordination includes ways decisions are made and shared in alliances-between partners. Behavioural coordination is based on the use of organisational culture and trust as mechanisms of learning (Miric et al, 2013). Guta (2013: 548) defines organisational learning capability as *“organisational and managerial characteristics that facilitate the organisational learning process or allows an organisation to learn”*. Corlett (2005:2) asserts that structures and systems are the cross-carriers of information and energy; they are secondary but important elements of organisational life. Examples of information gathering mechanisms are scanning units, quality circles, external alliances, and various forms of after-action reviews. In addition, organisations use tools that aid their members in interpreting information, exchanging views and information, and in transferring tacit knowledge that individuals have in order to create organisational knowledge (DiBella et al 1996). Employee rotation across and beyond their positions is one of such mechanism. Information analysis and combination mechanisms include designing systems to assist in verifying, sorting and filtering data that extend to all part of the organisation. Organisations also establish cross functional groups, allowing organisational members interpret information, and share ideas and data in order to make their environment more predictable (Ellis & Shpielberg 2003; Kar-Unluoglu & Easterby-Smith 2011).

Kane and Alavi (2007:788) in their study on information technology and organisational learning identified KRPs (knowledge, repositories and portals) as mechanisms better used for dissemination of structured knowledge. Organisational members may learn to use these tools to support learning in their organisation more effectively or time may render some of these tools less relevant as the amount of knowledge available through them become overwhelming for users. Understanding the effects of learning mechanisms is important as organisations use these tools toward the attainment of various OL outcomes. In line with this, Jones and Macpherson (2006) assert that if organisations are to survive in the long-term, they must develop mechanisms for processing information and knowledge management. Similar classification of OLMs across information acquisition and assimilation activities in distinct and diverse contexts were identified by Alavi and Leidner (2001) and Kar-Unluoglu and Easterby-Smith (2011) although termed knowledge management systems by the former. The application of these OLMs could be explained with varying factors such as the role of IT, levels of market dynamism, degree of change and the kind of organisation involved. Most organisations do not use a single mechanism because no one mechanism serves all purposes and different kinds of learning mechanisms have distinct influences on OL processes, and using multiple mechanisms together in organisational learning may result in unpredictable outcomes. According to Chou (2005), mechanisms of learning and knowledge acquisition are capable of exhibiting differences in outcomes with regard to knowledge creation and organisational performance. Examples of these mechanisms include IT steering committee, relationship manager, attending conferences. Alavi and Liedner (2001) in support of the positive impact of OLMs argue that mechanisms that establish partnership (relationship manager) supports and builds dialogue between partners, while learning activities like training provides and boost awareness of working practices. However, for organisations to learn, OLMs need to be supported by organisational, cultural and contextual facets (Kane and Alavi, 2007). In summary, for organisational learning to be productive, commitment to learning and supportive systems (mechanisms) flexible enough to meet the changing demands of the environment must be in place. The absence of such attributes may account for limited success in organisations (Oliver 2009:559). This forms the basis for elements shaping the process of organisational learning.

3.5 ELEMENTS SHAPING ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING

Elements shaping learning in organisations exist as the rules guiding organisations, or more formally, they are the human devised constraints that influence interaction. These elements reduce uncertainty by providing a structure to everyday life (Bjorck, 2004; North, 1990); providing both the formal constraints (for example rules and laws) and the informal constraints (like conventions and codes of conduct). Both the formal and informal constraints are devised by people to shape human interaction (Kshetri, 2010). Although (this) definition is widely accepted from the institutional theory perspective, it must be stressed that there are several other interpretations of these elements. This study will adopt the new institutional sociology theory of organisational and environmental analysis. Particularly, Scott's (2001) three pillars of institutions (regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive) for environmental analysis; and Zilber (2002; 2012) for organisational analysis (see figure 3.9) in investigating organisational learning in universities.

According to the new institutional theory, fundamental pressures embodying expectations exist within every society. In order to attain legitimacy, resources and learn organisations must manage these pressures from their environment (Bresser and Millonig, 2003). According to Palthe (2014) and Millonig (2002) these pressures are addressed on two levels, the macro and micro level. Macro-level considers the sources of pressures interfering with and shaping the behaviour of an organisation as being located within the external environment of the organisation. Micro-levels are sources of pressure internal to the organisation. These pressures can help explain an organisation's ability to acquire, use and dispose information (Bresser and Millonig, 2003). Scott (1995: 40) also observes internal and external pressures as present by stating that values and norms "*are both internalised and imposed by others*". Differences in the behaviours of organisations can be explained in terms of an institutional filter which determines the extent to which some environmental demands are compatible with an organisation's norms and values and are therefore adopted (Kshetri, 2010). Arguing on the relationship between macro and micro levels of pressures, Dienhart (2000: xvi) states that "*... markets ... are embedded in social institutions that guide behaviour, involve organisations that have internal structures (pressures) that guide behaviour, and involve individuals making decisions in the context of market and*

organisational institutions and relations. These sources of pressures shape the learning in organisations.

3.5.1 ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

The new institutional theory proposed that organisations are not only reflected by technical demands and resources dependencies, but are also shaped by forces-elements-such as myths, knowledge, and public opinion and law (Loundury 2008; Scott 1983; Zucker 1977). Powell (2007) suggests that organisations are embedded in social and political environments and that in turn defines how they behave- organisational behaviours are either reflections of or responses to the forces built in the wider environment. Scott (1995:33) defines these forces (elements) to *“consist of cognitive, normative and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behaviour. Institutions are transported by various carriers – cultures, structures, and routines – and they operate at multiple levels of jurisdiction”*. While, according to Shepsle (2006:23) *“is a script that names the actors [individuals, organisations], their respective behavioural repertoires (or strategies), the sequence in which the actor choose from them, the information they possess when they make their selection and the outcome resulting from the combination of actor choices”*. The social environment affects the behaviours and practices of organisations and people, who are considered as local actors. These actors are affected by forces built up in the wider environment (Meyer, 2008).

The initial argument of the neo institutionalism emphasized the role symbolic systems, cultural scripts and mental models played as effects of forces under stable patterns of activities that were routinely enacted (Dienhart, 2000). These arguments were however considered vague with respect to the mechanisms by which history and culture cemented social order and constraint organisational choices (Powell, 2007). Furthermore, subsequent contributions to the field addressed pressures that strengthen organisational forms to become similar. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) highlighted three forms of pressures- the coercive, mimetic and normative. Coercive pressure arises from an organisation’s dependence on other stakeholders. The forces of the national state and political pressures, providing regulatory control are examples of coercive forces (Deegan & Unerman, 2011). Mimetic pressures are results of taken for granted responses to uncertainties-*“uncertainty is a powerful force that encourages imitation”*

(Dimaggio and Powell, 1983: 151), while the pressure arising from group norms to employ or comply with particular practices is termed normative (Deegan & Unerman, 2011). Scott (1995: 2001) developed further on the above pressures and coined the regulative, normative and cognitive-cultural elements he termed institutional pillars, which relate to *“legally sanctioned”*, *“morally governed”* and *“recognizable taken for granted”* (Scott et al 2000: 238).

3.5.1.1 REGULATIVE PILLAR

The regulative pillar is distinguished by its explicit process of rule-setting, monitoring and sanctioning practices (Xu and Shenkar, 2002). In this view, regulatory process involves the capacity to establish or set rules, ensure its conformity, and manipulate its sanction (reward or punishment) in an attempt to influence present and future behaviour (Bruton et al., 2010). Sanctioning processes operate either through diffused informal mechanisms or by highly formalised and specialised structures or actors like polices and courts. According to Abbott et al (2001: 401) legalization- the formation of rules- *“refers to a particular set of characteristics that institutions may or may not possess”*. The value of these characteristics varies along three dimensions: obligation, precision and delegation. *Obligation* refers to the extent to which states or actors are bound to commit and obey rules, because their behaviour is subject to scrutiny under such laws. *Precision* means that rules uniquely define the conduct of actors as required or authorized. While, *delegation* refers to the authority granted to third parties to make rules and also implement rules in resolving disputes. These dimensions are not rigid dichotomy, but independently varying, depending on the degree and weight of gradation. But Scott (2008:60) suggests *“regulatory systems are those that exhibit high values on each of these dimensions while normative systems, exhibit lower values on them”*.

Researchers like (Bruton et al., 2010; Kshetri, 2010) perceive pressures as resting primarily on the regulative arm. For instance, North (1991: 4) conceptualised environmental forces as *“perfectly analogous to the rules of the game in a competitive team sport. That is, they consist of formal written rules as well as typically unwritten codes of conduct that underlie and supplement formal rules... the rules and informal codes are sometimes violated and punishment is enacted. Therefore, an essential part of the functioning of institutions is the costliness of ascertaining violations and the severity of*

punishment". North emphasis on the more formalised control systems reveals that they are likely to concentrate on individual and organisational behaviour in markets or on other competitive situations like politics, where opposing interests are common, and therefore, explicit rules are necessary to preserve order. The primary mechanism of such control involves the use of "coercion" (Aguilera et al., 2004; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). To Doyle (2012: 57) regulative factors play a major role in the management of an organisation. In his study on the development of occupational programs, it was evident that regulative variables as pressures have direct relationship with how occupational programs are developed. Some of these relationships are direct and some are consequential. The legitimacy concerns of this pillar focuses on managing regulatory and government demands (Kshetri, 2010).

Regulation implores the vision to suppress and constraint, but several types of regulations enable and empower social actors and actions with special benefits like conferring licenses, special powers etc (Mohammed, 2008). In fact, regulatory processes within the private sectors are more likely to depend on positive returns such as profits; and are public actors that make greater use of negative sanctions. However, in argument, can this claim be extended to private investments operating to provide basic services like education? However public sector actors are capable of framing social actors with more restricted powers of acting.

Force, sanctions and expedient reaction are central elements of the regulatory pillar, but are often altered by the presence of rules that justify the use of force (Hoffman, 1999). When coercion is both supported and constrained by rules, actors move into the realm of authority; and power becomes institutionalised (Lee and Pan, 2014). In conceptualising law as a regulatory mechanism, Hult (2003:154) insist that the coercive function of law should not be conflated with its normative and cognitive functions. Rather than operating in an authoritative manner, a lot of laws are usually controversial (ambiguous) that they do not proffer clear prescriptions for conduct. To that end, law is better contrived through sense-making and collective interpretation, relying more on its cognitive and normative elements than the coercive for its effects. But to Hirsch (1997: 1712) *"the [regulative] pillar's focus is on unambiguous and uncontested rules and laws...[it] is thus narrower than the field of law and social science, which encompasses more of the dynamics surrounding the creation and retention of laws as well as their*

enforcement". Arguably, forces reinforced by one pillar may be sustained by different pillars as time and situations unveil.

The institutional logic theory provides an instrumental view of regulative pillar. According to this theory, individuals employ rules and laws that tend to advance their interests; and confirm to laws and rules because they seek the attendant rewards. By this view, the regulative pillar revolves around rational choices made by actors. A stable formal or informal system of rules is backed by sanctioning power influencing actor's interests and choices that constitutes one prevailing view of institutions. Indicators of the development, extent and province of regulatory institutions are found in constitutions, laws, codes, directives, regulations, rules and formal structures of control (Scott, 2014).

3.5.1.1.1 Government Policies, Regulations and Development

Policies are altered in different ways. As long recognised, some policies are new and innovative, while others are purely incremental or refined (Bennett and Howlett, 1992). These policies and regulations have been argued to be important in guiding organisational operations (Rastogi 2010; Shafaeddin 2014) in distinct ways. According to the European Commission (2007) Government policies foster the internationalization and learning activities of universities and shape these activities in beneficial ways. While, Williams (2002) argues taking note of contextual differences that the regulative framework designed for organisations restrains their power on certain issues thought of as important to their operations because they are expected to conform and operate within defined regulations. Learning in these organisations could be part of such issues, especially when restricted or defined by national policies. Altbach and Knight (2007) point that Government policies on organisations varies from the provision of fund and resources, governance, quality assurance to general organisational operations, specifically how it affects a sector or industry. From a different perspective, Bennett and Howlett (1992) and Borrás (2011) examined the effects of learning on policies, where they gathered that learning tends to affect policies because Government and its agents need to draw lessons and knowledge about a particular aspect before making policies. Such knowledge is drawn from learning communities and organisations who relate their experiences and learning from where lessons are used to modify or make policies. It can however be argued that national

policies and regulations do not only interfere with the operations and learning in organisation, but policies are also influenced by the learning in organisations in presenting appropriate policies for their operations. Government policies and regulations have been identified as the main regulative institution but have been examined with concepts like organisational change, internationalization (Aguillera et al 2006; Altbach & Knight 2007; Huerta Melchor 2008; Jenkins 2008; Macfarlane et al. 2013; Palthe 2014; Smith & Graetz 2011) and would be relevant to consider it as a regulative element shaping organisational learning.

3.5.1.2 NORMATIVE PILLAR

This pillar places emphasis on normative rules that produce a prescriptive, evaluative and obligatory dimension into social life (Sandhu, 2009). Normative elements include values and norms. *Values* are “*desirable, trans-situational goals, varying in importance that serves as guiding principles in people’s lives*” (Schwartz, 2006: 1). While, *norms* are behavioural regularities supported partly by normative attitudes; contributing to stability by creating normative incentives (Licht, 2008). Normative systems define actors’ goals and objectives with appropriate means of pursuing them. Similarly, Kshetri (2000) asserts that normative pillar is concerned with procedural legitimacy and requires organisational members to embrace socially accepted norms and behaviours.

Some values and norms are applicable to all members of a community, while others only apply to selected members or position; given rise to the definition of roles of appropriate goals and activities for specific actors or social position (Aguilera et al., 2004). These beliefs are not predictions, but normative expectations-regarding how particular actors are meant to behave. The expectations are held by other prominent stakeholders, and experienced by the focal actor(s) as external pressures, and become internalised by the actor(s) (Lee and Pan, 2014). Roles are formally constructed. In organisations for example, particular positions are accompanied with specific rights and responsibilities and access to material resources as well (Mohammed, 2008). According to Blau and Scott (2003) roles can also emerge informally over time through interactions, relationships and expectations developed to guide behaviour. Normative systems do impose constraints on social behaviour, and also empowers and enables social actions. They confer rights, privileges, licenses as well as responsibilities, duties and mandates (Hirsch, 1997). Hult (2003) stresses that the power associated with these

kinds of roles are obtained from the license they are granted to engage in fateful activities.

Scholars (Bruton et al., 2010; Trevino et al., 2008) associated with the normative pillar point out the relevance of “appropriateness” vs “instrumental” logic. The confrontation actors often face is not *“what choice is in my own best interests? But, “given this situation, and my role within it, what is the appropriate behaviour for me to carry out?”* (Scott, 2008:65). Similar to regulative systems, normative systems also evoke strong feelings when confronted, but somewhat different from those relating to the violation of laws. Feelings associated with trespassing of norms include: a sense of shame or disappointment, or feeling of respect and honour- for those exhibiting exemplary behaviours. The violation or conformity to norms involves to an extent large measures of self-evaluation (heightened remorse or self-control and respect). These emotions drive actors to comply with prevailing norms (Bruton et al., 2010). While according to Kshetri (2010) Social obligation is the basis of compliance with normative pressures and non-adherence could lead to societal and professional sanctions. Indicators of normative institutions include cooperation, accreditations and certifications by standard setting bodies, competition, organisational freedom.

3.5.1.2.1 Cooperation or Competition?

The European Commission (2007) identified that organisations either cooperate or compete in response to societal demands. Inter-organisational cooperation according to Gebrekidan and Awuah (2002:679) *“is a manifestation of strategies that entail the pooling of skills and resources by the alliance partners in order to achieve one or more goals linked to the strategic objectives of the cooperating firms”*. To Conteh (2013) collaboration as a form of inter-organisational cooperation is where different agencies commit to working together for long-term, with the sole purpose of providing exceptional services or adding value that could not have been provided by any of the individual agency. In essence collaboration provides that “edge” and uniqueness in service. Closely linked, Albani and Dietz (2009) identified cooperation as partnership and other forms of networking which aid organisations in competing at national and international levels. This means that inter-organisational cooperation is driven by the truism that no organisation has all the capacities to achieve its goals in the market field

(Gebrekidan and Awuah, 2002); thus the quest to learn from others. Inkpen (1997:2000) stresses that joint venture provides the solid ground for learning and knowledge acquisition which can be used as competitive advantage. Similarly, Huang (2010) posits that only through cooperation of organisations that they can learn and tap unique and unavailable knowledge. Cooperation is therefore considered the appropriate forum for learning and also the stepping stone to tackle competition.

Discussing on competition, Farrukh and Waheed (2015) debated that for organisations to stand edgily above others they must be learning organisations, organisations receptive to learning and willing to pay the price for learning. Competition to Frey (2008) is the extent to which markets are opened or the preference of customers reflected in the activities and operations of organisations. Organisations who explore and exploit the market, therefore learn and gain knowledge which helps them build competitive advantage difficult for other organisations to replicate. Just like the words of Apperbaum and Gallagher (2000) that competitive advantage is the result of putting an organisation's learning to action and not merely learning. And for organisations to compete, they must have adequate and up to date information and knowledge of rivals, market and customers' preferences. While for Harman (2008) organisations aiming to compete through cooperation must take into consideration elements like partner compatibility, available resources, information and communication structure as well as traits like commitment, developing a good work relationship and trust. As these elements could either make or mar the success of the collaboration as well as the learning between organisations.

3.5.1.2.2 Institutional Autonomy

The extent to which organisations operate as autonomous remains a matter of debate. This to Laegreid et al (2008) is highly applicable to public organisations that are dependent on Government and other agencies for funding and legislation, who strive to replicate private sector strategies in operating. Although private organisations fund themselves, they also rely on Government legislations to carry out their activities. It would be reasonable to argue that the autonomy of public and private organisations to operate and learn differs and so the level of control. Autonomy is the state of self-governance (Collier, 2002). According to Lorsuwannarat (2007) autonomy is the extent to which organisations are free to make decisions about their operations and activities.

Similarly, it refers to the freedom of public agencies to make decisions concerning their management, inputs and processes (Verhoest et al 2004). The ability of organisations to solely direct their activities influences their learning. For instance, Bettis-Outland (2012) asserts that the method of decision making used by organisations results in their learning differently. When organisations make strategic decisions on their own it leads to generative learning; whereas when they consult with external parties like competitors and other agencies it results in transformative learning. Huber (1991), Dixon (1992) labels this form of learning as “vicarious learning”, while Nikolaos and Evangelia (2012) describes corporate intelligence as an organisation’s consultation with competitors in order to learn. Maula (2006) commends, autonomous organisations have strong learning culture and engage more in exploratory learning to build their knowledge base. Closely linked, Hanaki and Owan (2013) argue that *“high-autonomy organisations promote individual initiatives to experiment with new ideas and building their strength on individual learning”*, while Schuck (2000) counters this argument, acknowledging that institutional autonomy retards organisational learning as no control is in place rather change and feedback are often delayed. Autonomy therefore influences the learning in organisations as it is exercised by organisations.

3.5.1.3 COGNITIVE-CULTURAL PILLAR

According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983); Goffman (1967), Meyer (2008); Powell and DiMaggio (1991); Scott (2001), this pillar centres on shared beliefs that constitute the nature of social reality, creating the frames through which meaning is made. Old theorists (Zucker, 1977) of cognitive-cultural drew and focused on the cognitive dimensions of human existence: *“mediating between the external world of stimuli and the response of the individual organism is a collection of internalised symbolic representations of the world”* (Scott, 2008:67). According to this paradigm, the internal representation of an organism’s environment determines how it acts or behaves-gestures and signs- and affects the meaning organisms attribute to activities and objects (Hoffman, 1999). Meanings and interpretations arise in interaction and are sustained and expanded upon as they are employed to make sense of ongoing events. To understand any action, both objective conditions and subjective interpretation of actors must be taken into account (Aguilera et al., 2004; Wicks, 2001). Mohammed (2008) stipulates that cognitive frames engage in information-processing activities, from identifying and selecting relevant

information, encoding, organizing, interpreting, retaining and retrieving; thus affecting people's analysis, judgements and learning.

The new cultural perspective focuses on treating culture as not only a subjective belief but also symbolic systems seen as objective and external to actors (Sandhu, 2009). Xu and Shenkar (2002: 610) summarised that organisations are sedimentation of meanings in objective form. The label "*cognitive-cultural*" means that internal interpretive processes are influenced by external cultural facets (Lee and Pan, 2014). As Trevino et al (2008:121) propose, cultural properties drive and shape cognitive activities and containers (memories) in which social interests are defined and negotiated. Or in Hofstede's (1991:4) thinking, "*culture provides patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting mental programs, or the software of mind*".

Most times the constitutive function of the cognitive-cultural pillar, which is most fundamental, is overlooked. Symbolic processes work to give meaning to social reality; define the nature and activities of social actors and actions. According to Scott (2008:68) "*cultural systems operate at multiple levels from the shared definition of local situations, to the common frames and patterns of belief that comprise an organisation's culture, to the organizing logics that structure organisation fields, to the shared assumptions and ideologies that define preferred political and economic systems at national and transnational levels*". These levels are nested so that cultural frameworks diffuse and shape people's beliefs on one end, and people's interpretations can work to reconfigure archaic belief systems on the other end.

Cultural elements vary in terms of the extent of their linkage to and with the normative and regulative elements, the degree to which they are part of routines or organizing schema. Cognitive-cultural elements are more embedded cultural forms, "*culture congealed in the forms that require less by way of maintenance, ritual reinforcement, and symbolic elaboration than the softer realms we usually think of as cultural*" (Jepperson and Swidler, 1994: 363). Cultures are often perceived as unitary systems, occurring internally across groups and events. But cultural beliefs usually vary: beliefs are not held by all, but by some people. Individuals facing the same situation can judge the situation differently, in terms of reasoning and actions. Cultural beliefs differ and are

frequently contested, especially in moments of social disorganisation and change (Yeh, 2007).

For cognitive-cultural, compliance occurs in many different situations because other forms of behaviour are inconceivable; routines are carried out because they are taken for granted as ways things are done in a community or an organisation (Bruton et al., 2010). The logical justification behind conformity is that of orthodoxy, *"the perceived correctness and soundness of the ideas underlying actions"* (Scott, 2008: 69). Giving a different interpretation of social roles, from that of normative pillar, cognitive-cultural elements focus on the power of templates for particular kinds of actors and actions than stressing the force of mutually reinforcing obligations as in normative. In essence, the cognitive-cultural conception concentrates on the central role played by the social mediation of a common framework of meanings. For organisations, the cultural-cognitive pillar involves *"the shared conceptions that constitute the nature of social reality and the frames through which meaning is made"* (Scott, 2001: 57). Organisations cultural-cognitive are evident in profile and mission, diversity and languages.

3.5.1.3.1 Culture

Culture can contribute to the learning in organisations. Culture according to Cyckowski and Grobstein (2008) is an account of how societies have developed over the years for people to conduct their lives and perform their tasks as a community; it is also a set of rigid customs, patterns and protocols that guides individual desires to accept or contradict other structures. To Lee (2007:3) culture is defined as *"shared values, social norms, group learning and beliefs...and a significant force that influences people's behaviour, attitude, and mental models. Accordingly, [it] plays an important role in organisations."* Organisations are makeup of individuals with difference in culture and beliefs and so their ideologies. These beliefs and culture defines who they are how they think and act as stressed by Barker (2002) culture is a way of life. Besides organisational culture, national/individual culture is known to shape the learning in organisations, as they learn through their members. Organisational members create and warrant knowledge through the primary weapons- ideas and learning- from which they exercise control in defining reality according to their cognitive and cultural principles and framework (Scott, 2008). Jenkins (2012) considers this as cultural authority, the construction of reality through the definitions of values, which plays a role in

supporting learning, the pursuit and organisation of knowledge. Research shows that differences in culture disrupt learning in organisations (Avny and Anderson). Conversely, Lopuch and Davis (2014) argue that culture fosters learning by creating diversity in all ramifications (unique contributions and inputs from organisational members) portraying culture as an influential element (Lee, 2007). It is important to examine the link between culture and the learning in universities in a multi-cultural context as there are limited studies on individual/ national culture and organisational learning.

In reality, the distinction between the regulative, normative and cognitive-cultural pillars is not always strict and might sometimes overlap. These environmental elements which are dynamic can impact how organisations operate and learn (Hult, 2003). Powell (2007:2) recommends that a key concern for institutional analysis is to ascertain important factors in particular contexts and the extent to which they influence the prevailing social order or undercut one another. Organisations tend to develop more internal administrative capacity, when organisational environments contain multiple influences (Meyer & Scott, 1983). Organisations can respond to environmental elements, changes and get to learn with modification in their *“micro environment”* i.e. organisational elements (organisational structure, culture, learning strategies, resources and organisational politics). Independently, the organisational elements can also influence and shapes how organisations learn. Just as Zucker (1987:446) asserts that institutional elements do arise from within an organisation itself *“not from power or coercive processes located in the state or elsewhere”*.

3.5.2 ORGANISATIONAL ELEMENTS

3.5.2.1 Organisational culture

It is argued that organisational culture plays a critical role in the process of organisational learning (Joseph 2008; Lopez et al 2004; Martins and Martins 2002). Based on literature, certain aspects of organisational culture such as bureaucracy, limited resources, restricted freedom, and unclear goals can shape the learning in organisations (Martin and Terblanche 2003; Skerlavaj et al 2010). An environment that creates and promotes autonomy, provides required resources, sets clear goals, and

encourages participation in organisational activities and operations, is favourable for organisational learning (Som et al, 2010). Additionally, if an organisation's culture presents supportive, open and trustworthy relationships with and among employees then it enables effective organisational learning (Skerlavaj et al 2010). Chang and Lee (2007) also argue that learning organisations are more supportive in respect of encouraging knowledge creation, dissemination and retention than traditional organisations.

Organisational culture is defined in unique ways by researchers. According to Watson (2006), the concept of organisational culture connotes something that is cultivated. Kodjo and Changjun (2009: 244) define organisational culture as *"a main element for promoting an innovative environment. [It] represents the process of the way things are done. [It] is the core factor, but it must also fit with the structure of organisation, the management of employees, leadership style and knowledge strategy systems"*. Schein (2004:7) refers to the culture within organisations as the *"climate and practices that organisations develop around their handling of people, or to the espoused values and credo of an organisation"*. Culture entails inculcating the right values in an organisation. It also implies that better and stronger or weaker and worse culture do exist, but the right kind of culture influences how effective an organisation is. Priyanka (2014) understands an organisation's culture to be the beliefs, values and principles that governs a particular organisation. Azadi et al (2013:13) also defines organisational culture as *"the deeply rooted values and beliefs that are shared by personnel in an organisation"*. In the context of this study, organisational culture is therefore referred to the beliefs and values that shape the learning in organisations. This is because organisational learning involves the creation, dissemination, use and retention of information and knowledge by an organisation and its personnel (Huber 1991; Scott, 2011), and it is accepted that the values and beliefs of people drives organisational learning when they interact and share ideas, knowledge and experiences (Baoteng 2011; Rook 2013). Hence, understanding the organisational culture-the beliefs and values- that exist within the organisation helps in identifying the influence and role of such beliefs and values on organisational learning, and particularly the drive for different organisational learning. In defining organisational culture, Sagiv and Schwartz (2007) argue that the culture of an organisation is influenced by the surrounding

society, personal value of organisational members and the nature of the organisation's primary tasks. Organisations exist and operate in societies and under societal pressures. Therefore, organisations have to comply with norms, values and regulations of societies to be accepted as members of the society and consequently gain legitimacy. These pressures are often brought about by dominant factors like technology, leadership, organisation's information and expectations, legislative and other environmental activities, organisational structures, values and resources, resulting in organisational member's norms and attitudes being altered towards contributing collectively and positively to the culture of the organisation (Meyer 2008; Powell 2007; Scott 2014).

Leadership/management styles are considered important dimensions reflecting the underlying values and beliefs of an organisation (Cameron and Quinn, 1999; Martins and Terblanche, 2003), and top management' leadership style shapes organisational learning within an organisation (Chang and Lee, 2007). Leadership that stimulates organisational learning is likely to create tolerable environment for failure, and encourage experimentation (Carmeli and Sheaffer 2008; Edmondson 2004). In fact, several accounts suggest that changes in organisational culture are directly associated with the leadership and commitment of top management (Koplyay et al., 2013; Vera and Crossan 2004). Organisational leaders define and shape working culture; and leaders who encourage knowledge acquisition and use by aligning individuals' values and purpose with those of the organisation enable organisational learning (Uma, 2011). This leadership style is identified as 'transformational leadership'. It is well acknowledged that exercising a democratic leadership style enables learning at individual and group levels. Vera and Crossan (2004) established that teams with high enthusiasm towards learning generally receive greater top leadership support. And Martin and Martin (2002) revealed that when supportive and empowering behaviour is shown by leaders in organisations, it greatly enhances the learning will and performance of employees. Empowered individuals and teams are considered outcomes of visionary leadership that supports organisational learning and innovation (Garvin et al 2008; Sarin and McDermott, 2003; Tushman and O'Reilly, 1997).

Amue (2014) recently pointed out that an organisation's strategic orientation affects its learning initiatives. This is because the organisation's business orientation plays a critical role in determining the business strategy and subsequent learning activities.

Organisations possessing strong market orientation show better learning outcomes as market orientation enables organisations identify and satisfy customers, possibly in better ways, while Liu and Fu (2011) suggest that organisations with a combination of entrepreneurial orientation and market orientation tend to perform better than those with only a market orientation. Martins and Terblanche (2003) argue that an organisation's strategic approach (basically the way an organisation reacts to internal and external events) is associated with its working culture. While, Storey and Hughes (2013) also pointed out that the change in strategic approach of an organisation is associated with the assumptions and values embedded in the organisational culture, and therefore, if the change in strategic approach is to be successful, significant modification must occur within the organisational culture. Dauber et al (2012: 5) stated that the strategic options and behaviour of an organisation reflects the values and underlying belief system of the organisational culture. Employee developments, exploration of new ideas and opportunities and organisation stability are couple of strategic options that reflects the kind of culture of a particular organisation. For instance, a culture that promotes experimentation and opportunity seeking indicates an organisational push to learning (Salas and Glinow, 2007).

It can be argued that an organisation's underlying values and beliefs sustains the relationship between organisational members-just like a glue. Dixon (1999) describes this as organisational glue (the symbol of the organisation) that binds organisational members together and promotes social capital which in turn creates and energises collectivity. The social characteristics- trust and interaction- and value system of an organisation are important for organisational learning, because these aspects supports and promotes interpersonal relationship, in which collective meaning are created and shared, and interactive working environment is fostered (Swift, 2013). From such an interactive environment eventuates the commitment to learning, achievement and goal accomplishment, thereby reinforcing the binding force of organisational members and reflecting the existing organisational culture. In essence, the successes of an organisation together with the mutual trust and relationship reflect the culture of an organisation at a point in time. Carmeli et al (2009) argue that the nature and strength of interpersonal relationships among organisational members determines the culture of the organisation and it is relevant for learning for such relationships to be strong. Good

relationships develop the platform for trust, mutual understanding and supportive behaviours among employees while creating a working culture that aids the implementation of organisational plans. The literature suggests that relationships among organisational members and with external networks play a critical role in organisational learning (Inkpen and Tsang, 2005). The strength, fit and trustworthiness of an organisational culture is mirrored through these relationships. Hayton and Macchitella (2013) proposes that an entrepreneurial culture allows for external inputs by employees through built networks and these inputs help in generating new ideas, patterns of thinking and learning. Moreover, as organisational learning demands the input and scrutiny of diverse ideas, connections between organisational members and external parties provide a favourable platform for learning (Inkpen, 1998). Hence an organisational culture that is open supports good and trustworthy relationships and networks within and outside the working environment which enables organisational learning, but also good relationship which builds group thinking may affect organisational learning negatively due to high group cohesiveness. Comas (2014) believes that less cohesive teams are more effective in learning.

As organisational culture is considered a primary determinant of organisational learning by researchers; the literature also points towards understanding the association between culture and determinants of organisational learning (Cox and Jones 2005; Wellman 2009). Tseng (2008) claims organisational learning starts from the vision and mission of an organisation. Additionally, employees' awareness and alignment with organisational vision and mission supports organisational learning. The priorities and values of organisations are generally reflected by their goals and objectives, and these can either hinder or enable the learning in the organisation (Chadwick and Raver, 2012). Hence, it is readily apparent that organisational culture influences the learning strategy of organisations. Learning becomes possible or prevented by the particular organisational structure in place. In this respect, organisational culture, which promotes flexibility, autonomy, and teamwork, reflects an organic-type structure, which is considered favourable for organisational learning and innovation. Whereas, an organisational culture that invigorates rigidity and control, supports a mechanistic-type structure that tends to impact negatively on the potential for learning (Martinez-Leon and Martinez-Garcia, 2011). It can however be clearly

argued that organisational culture promotes a particular type of organisational structure and hence acts as a determinant of organisational learning through this mechanism.

Researchers identify that the underlying values and beliefs of an organisation influences its learning and knowledge management activities (Cox and Jones 2005; Skerlavaj et al., 2010). In this respect, Cho (2007) stresses the importance of top management support in organisational learning and Hatala and Lutta (2009) acknowledges this, noting that information and knowledge dissemination in an organisation is highly influenced by the support of top management. Relating on knowledge dissemination, Popper and Lipshitz (2000) believe that useful information and knowledge is absorbed by the organisation through its cultural mechanisms, thereby affirming arguments on the need for a culture, which proselytizes learning and networking. An organisational culture that questions the availability of organisational resources is likely to enhance organisational learning. Taking up this argument, Smith et al (1996) argue that organisational learning is determined by an organisation's ability to provide required resources, and those organisations capable of providing continuous required resources are likely to benefit from better outcomes resulting from conducive organisational learning. An organisational culture that encourages the recruitment and development of right human resources generally enhances the capacity of the organisation to learn (Lopez et al., 2006). Also, the human resource of an organisation is influenced by the culture of the organisation in terms of determining the process and method of recruitment, selection, promotion, reward and more. Conversely, organisational members introduce their own value preferences into the organisation, which represents – the way individuals act, select and evaluate events and people in their environment, and justifications for their actions and choices, thus shaping organisational culture to an extent (Sagiv and Schwartz, 2007: 183). Jacobs and Washington (2003) argue an organisation with the culture of training and building its human resource capacity enhances the capacity of the organisation to learn. When an organisation adopts a human resource policy aimed at promoting and maintaining good employee relationships, it further enhances employee satisfaction and this in turn facilitates learning. Likewise, good working relationships represent another means of managing and directing organisational members towards learning (Kocoglu et al., 2011).

While organisational culture is important and an integral part of every organisation, it is understood to evolve overtime. According to Prugsamatz (2010:250), organisational culture exists in form of basic underlying assumptions, behavioural patterns, beliefs, symbols, norms, values, history and ethical codes established or in use from an organisation's inception, and evolve over time. In essence, the culture of an organisation is never static, and it is however relevant that organisation operates different cultural values due to the uncertain nature of their environment, thereby requiring a variety of insight and a high need for flexibility and learning.

3.5.2.2 Learning strategy

Learning strategy is a critical determinant of how organisations learn (Beer et al 2005; Goodyear et al 2006; March 1991). Organisations require a learning strategy to ensure learning and achieve organisational objectives, as argued by Hirsh (2005); aligning learning strategy with the organisational activities facilitates employees learning initiatives and innovation. This alignment may be with the organisational strategy or specific aspects of the strategy such as growth projects, strategic networks. This idea is not new as Goodyear et al (2006) found a significant association between strategy and organisational learning. Understanding the learning strategy of an organisation does not only promote learning in the organisation, but also contributes towards other outcomes (Beer et al., 2005)). Monitoring competitors' actions, gathering external information, resource allocation for R&D, and innovative exploration are energised when there is a learning strategy. Organisations that engage in such practices often show positive and innovative performance (Comas 2014; Hanaki and Owan 2013). Niazi (2011) revealed organisations with clearly spelt learning strategies improve their financial and non-financial performance. Learning strategy itself is accounted for differently. O'Malley and Chamot (1995: 1) define learning strategies as *"special ways of processing information that enhance comprehension, learning, or retention of the information"*. Hirsh (2005) believes learning strategy is all about why learning is important and how learning will occur, not just about what organisational members need to learn. In essence, learning strategy consist of several dimensions, of which learning priorities at any point in time may not be the most fundamental. According to Cross (2005:4) *"a learning strategy is required to identify and develop the critical people skills and resources to help establish alignment with business priorities"*. Bersin (2013) views learning strategy as part of

organisational strategy, which concentrates on achieving competitive advantage through the development of new products, market growth, or a new business model. To Hanaki and Owan (2013) learning strategy is explorative and exploitation activities linked to the strategy of an organisation. This is because the underlying assumption that drives an effective learning strategy is that “learning is the critical enabler ensuring that people [and organisations] are continuously refreshing and enhancing their skills and knowledge” (Cross, 2005: 3). Organisational members must be equipped with the relevant skills and knowledge to meet the evolving demands of the business environment. The success of organisational learning is determined by the strategic decision of striking the right balance between the exploitation of existing capabilities and the exploration of new knowledge (Beer et al., 2005; March, 1991). The ability of an organisation to maintain the balance between exploration and exploitation boost organisational performance, and as such supports the effective allocation of resources. Though maintaining this balance is complicated not only by determining, what the right balance should be, but also by the ways learning contributes to this imbalances (Puhan, 2008). Levinthal and March (1991) also posit, that the activities of exploration and exploitation are directly linked with strategic decision-making of an organisation. For instance, the effective selection of organisational practices can be considered as explorative or exploitative based on its closeness to existing or new alternative practices. Organisational learning which occurs due to exploration activities is often directed to newness-knowledge, insights, experimentation or discovery-, whereas organisational learning through exploitative activities generally relies on status and knowledge (Lamberson & Sachdeva, 2013). However, this study considers learning strategy as part of corporate strategy, which enhances organisational learning through exploration or exploitation.

Researchers believe that organisations should take into consideration certain conditions when determining their learning strategy. Establishing a balance between refining existing and developing new competencies and capabilities is certainly one condition (Hanaki and Owan 2013; Tushman and O'Reilly, 1996). When organisations invest in developing and implementing new ideas and capabilities while exploiting and maximising current capabilities, they are known to be ambidextrous, and organisations exhibiting such learning strategy tend to be more successful than those executing a

single strategy (O'Reilly and Tushman 2004; Wei et al 2014). In fact, O'Reilly and Tushman (2004) reveal that most organisations attempt to be ambidextrous to learn widely and keep abreast. Another decision to consider when choosing a learning strategy is whether an organisation decides to execute its learning strategy internally or externally as some critical expertise, knowledge base, information and resources relevant for organisational learning can be obtained through and from external parties such as suppliers, customers, higher education institutions, (Dixon 1992; Huber 1991; Nikolaos and Evangelia 2012). This in essence reflects the shaping effects of learning strategy on organisational learning.

Organisations can learn through R&D or through external networks or indeed from both means (Inkpen and Tsang, 2005). What really matters is that organisations must be aware of the suitable mechanisms for learning when a learning strategy is developed. As for some organisations, the learning mechanisms may change as situation changes. Certainly, a critical strategic decision in formulating the learning strategy is whether to rely on internal (research) or external mechanism like networks, and the effectiveness or support of such mechanism. Gleich et al (2012) argues that both internal and external information and insight are essential components of learning strategies. Falkenberg et al (2003) indicate that the learning strategies of risk-seeking firms are dependent on external resources; while learning in entrepreneurial organisations is derived from internal activities. In conclusion, the choice of adopting an internal or external source or means for learning is highly dependent on the capabilities and capacity of an organisation (Zahra and George, 2002). Tippins and Sohi (2003) further argue that the choice of an organisation's learning strategy depends on the objectives, beliefs, symbols and values of the organisation. Employees' awareness and understanding of the organisational culture builds a more unified and acceptable learning strategy, because it is believed employees will willingly support and encourage the achievement and implementation of what they belief and are aligned with.

3.5.2.3 Organisational Structure

The structure of an organisation affects either positively or negatively on the learning in the organisation. Organisational structure is therefore an internal determinant of organisational learning (Hao et al 2012; Kanten et al 2015; Martinez-Leon and Martinez-Garcia 2011). The association between organisational structure and

organisational learning has long been established and scholars have found structural characteristics that affect organisational learning. Curado (2006) argues that a flat, decentralised organisational structure triggers organisational learning as it supports the free flow of new ideas. This form of structure permits autonomy and the authority to make decisions, thereby enables learning and innovations by producing more productive, committed and satisfied workforce. The level of autonomy and authority exercise by employees reflects the level of empowerment and the nature of the existing structure (Martins and Terblanche, 2003). Dauber et al (2012: 7) defines structures “*as the manifestation of strategic orientations and regulate information flows, decision making, and patterns of behaviour, that is internal allocation of tasks, decisions, rules, and procedures for appraisal and reward, selected for the best pursuit of...strategy*”. While to Martinez-Leon and Martinez-Garcia (2011:543) organisational structure reflects the way an organisation distributes information and knowledge within its setting, which affects the efficiency of their utilization. Consequently, it substantially influences the coordination and distribution of organisational resources, communication patterns, and the interaction between employees. Therefore, the configuration of organisational structure facilitates or destructs an organisation’s capacity to learn, change and innovate. Put differently, organisational structure mirrors the formal scheme of authority, decision-making, information and learning flow process/ systems, procedures, relationships and communication (Dicle and Okan, 2015). Following this line of thinking, this study explains organisational structure as the configuration of an organisation in terms of the command of authority, relationship, communication and information flow that shapes the learning activities of the organisation. As Martinez-Leon and Martinez-Garcia (2011) argue, the culture of an organisation affects its learning-enabling structure.

A culture that promotes flexibility, autonomy, and teamwork encourages an organic-type structure, whereas one, which is characterised by rigidity, control, predictability, stability and order, promotes a hierarchical structure and hampers organisational learning and innovation (Martins and Terblanche 2003). Writers like Darvish and Norozi (2011) and Ravangard et al (2014) argue that employee autonomy, empowerment, and participation in decision making stimulate organisational learning as organisational members are given the space and opportunity to act independently

and achieve their goals. Consequently, management should not impose controls but rather encourage their workforce to be initiative by empowering them and removing all barriers to learning (Islam et al 2014). Formalisation and routine explains the extent to which an organisation's structure captures mechanistic elements such as rules, procedures, job functions, and formalised communications (Dicle and Okan, 2015). Curado (2006) contributes that routines, standardised, and written rules improve organisational efficiency, which can support exploitative form of learning. But when an organisation is less routinized, it can support more explorative learning. However, Lavie et al (2010) argue that informal mechanisms may affect explorative activities negatively because the structure may ineffectively integrate learning and innovation within the organisation. Likewise, Su and McNamara (2012) find the argument that formalisation stands as barrier to explorative activities absurd, believing formalisation does not necessarily hinder exploration and learning. Study by Miner et al (2008) supports the notion that routines hardly prevent learning. On the contrary, Bloodgood (2009) and Cohendet and Llerena (2001) establish the certainty that formalisation acts as a barrier to organisational learning. Certainly, an organisation's exhibition of semi-formalisation could bring about openness, flexibility which enables new ideas and behaviours, and high levels of formalisation, as found in mechanistic-type structures limits learning potentials, because the high degree of specialisation, formalisation, standardisation, and centralisation all discourage the quest for new knowledge. This however, identifies the inconsistency in findings on the relationship between formalisation and organisational learning in the literature.

Kanten et al (2015) emphasised the importance of good communication channels for effective organisational learning, and having a fluid decision making process enables learning in organisations. Dimovski and Skerlavaj (2004) mentioned that a structure that supports and encourages effective connections and knowledge dissemination between organisational arms enhances research and the access to new information, thereby enabling organisational learning. Similarly, Day (1995) pointed that the connection between related and unrelated parties increases the opportunities for individual learning, thus updating their exiting knowledge and that of the organisation. Choe (2004) also found that relating with individuals or other sections fosters knowledge exchange and thus, enables organisational learning. Hatala and Lutta (2009)

argue that as organic or informal structures are characterised by fewer formalised strands than mechanistic or formal structures, they motivate employees to experiment and explore. To this end, Informal structures connect people and other organisational makeup effectively, thus opening channels for communication and allowing for informal means of knowledge dissemination. When people easily get connected with others, they tend to be exposed to abrupt knowledge and can engage in explorative activities (Lavie et al 2010). Cross-functional teams are identified as enablers of organisational learning because they encourage diversity. Organisational learning can be affected by the level of diversity in members' backgrounds and experience (Argote, 1999:2012). Organisations whose members possess diverse knowledge or information due to variations in their backgrounds or training can support the learning process by enabling an organisation to make novel associations and links. Diversity can be enhanced by contact with both internal and external influences. In this respect, Nevis et al (1995) stated that the ability of team members to relate with the external world is important for accessing new knowledge and learning. Tyre and Von Hippel (1997) proposed that employees should move repeatedly among several physical settings (shuffle across departments), because different settings provide distinct and unique opportunities for learning. Exchange between functions and responsibilities (job rotation) such as marketing and production is another facilitator of learning in organisations. Rotation aids the understanding of members of an organisation on the business activities from a multiplicity of perspectives.

Teams are valuable in organisations, because they enable learning and innovative deliberation; and an organisational structure that stimulates the development of work teams is important. Edmondson (2002) suggest a positive association exist between team composition, size and organisational learning. Small teams are argued to be more effective for learning as large teams destabilize effective communication and group efforts (Martins and Terblanche, 2003). Indeed, Argote (2012) posits that large and uncommitted teams are dysfunctional, and batter the team effectiveness due to 'social loafing'. However, Dayaram and Fung (2014) believe that extensively small teams may not generate sufficiently diverse ideas and hence, not support learning. Moreover, evidence suggests that when team members stay together for a long period of time, the effectiveness of communication declines because the team become detached from

critical evaluation of information and knowledge (Argote, 2012). It is however reasonable to suggest that temporal and short-termed teams are more effective, although long termed teams could offer unique opportunities and benefits for learning. According to social theory of learning, Learning involves a shared process which occurs through observing, commune working (working together) and being part of a larger group, which includes members of varying levels of experience, able to stimulate one another's development (Easterby-Smith and Araujo 1999; Gherardi et al 1998). In this view, individuals only learn from competent people but with the emphasis on being part of a larger system.

Organisational structure has a direct effect on employee behaviour. As earlier noted, teams are valuable, and an organisational structure that fosters team behaviour is supportive of organisational learning, since teamwork encourages openness to analysis of new ideas and engagement in learning and innovative activities (Babnik et al 2014; Van Der Vegt and Bunderson 2005). Also organisational behaviour and organisational structure are directly linked; structure builds the frame of inference upon which organisational operations are managed and it guides the behaviour of organisational members, which translates to certain "patterns of behaviour" supported by the structure of the organisation (Dauber et al, 2011:7). In reverse, structures are dynamic and can change over time as result of new organisational conditions, resulting in the need to align and modify organisational behaviour of employees so that they could access and acquire relevant and varied knowledge that would aid in tackling fluctuations, problems and diverse situations. Therefore, structure is never an organisational static condition, it changes based on the differing environmental pressures in need of respond by developing appropriate structures, practices and policies (Martinez-Leon and Martinez-Garcia, 2011).

3.5.2.4 Organisational Resources

Researchers argue that the effectiveness of organisational learning is dependent on the availability of resources (Aragon et al 2014; Gilanina et al 2013; Lopez et al 2006). According to Gilanina et al (2013), learning must be properly supported, and successful organisations tend to allocate sufficient resources to their learning activities. In essence, organisations with abundant resources engage in and promote more experimentation and learning and the generation of new ideas. Learning organisations and organisations

highly appreciative of learning often allocate sufficient funds for learning projects (Garvin et al 2008; Senge 1990).

Learning is also shaped by the ability of organisations to access relevant required resources; and the continuous funding and resource provisions towards information and knowledge acquisition and utilization are likely to achieve end results (Kraatz and Zajac, 2001). Berkhout et al (2004) note that the availability of resources is relevant for the effective learning of an organisation and its members, but maintaining a clear channel for obtaining resources for learning activities can most times be difficult. When the relationship between resources and organisational learning is discussed, it is useful to identify the types of resources that influence the learning efforts of an organisation. Different studies account for different forms of organisational resources. For instance, Wicker and Breuer (2013) identifies five kinds of resources namely: financial, organisational, human resources, cultural and infrastructure resources. Physical, reputational and technological, human, physical, and financial resources are other forms of resources stressed in the work of Julienti et al. (2010). However, Yin-nor (2015) asserts, any productive assets can be classified as resources. In broad terms, these resources can be categorised as tangible and intangible assets. Examples of tangible resources are capital, building, and equipment, while intangible resources include organisational assets like employee knowledge, experience, skills, and reputation (Yin-nor, 2015). Lopez-Cabrales et al. (2011) consider resources human, capital, and physical. They explain the relationship between organisational learning and resources based on how proper management of resources especially human resource, support learning activities. Child and Heaven (2003) mentioned that resources like information, infrastructure, time, and money, are important for successful learning in organisations. Lopez et al (2006) also focused on human resources, emphasising how important people are in the learning process of organisations.

Similarly, Wah (2013) discusses the importance of sufficient and efficient allocation of resources for learning activities. Hence, this study understands resources to be both tangible and intangible assets required for and shapes organisational learning. Osibanjo and Adeniji (2013) observed that the combination of people, tools, service, culture and fund resources affect learning and innovation significantly, noting that the resource bundle is not limited to a particularly resource only, but the interplay between all.

Addressing the same issue, Yin-nor (2015) mentioned that the blend of intangible and tangible resources affects employees, organisational learning and new initiatives. Ranjbar and Absalan (2015) pointed out that human resource, specifically human knowledge is the most scarce and critical resource; the efficient allocation of human resource affects learning activities of organisations. However, as employees are fundamental to the learning and innovation in an organisation, they should be provided sufficient resources to allow ideas to emerge and be implemented. Providing a conducive environment for learning enhances employee commitment to both learning and the organisation, because employees feel appreciated and task supported by the organisation (Ganesh et al 2014). Clearly, when employees are not allotted adequate time and autonomy to explore and experiment, they may distrust the organisation and become less motivated and satisfied (Jin and Lee, 2012). Conversely, the excessive allocation of time and autonomy may deter the sense of task urgency and disrupts the ability to face challenges as and when they occur.

Ployhart and Schneider (2012) discuss the importance of structuring, bundling and leveraging organisational resources (resource management) in establishing competitive advantage through value creation activities for customers. Duncan (2004) opined that the ability of an organisation to co-ordinate, integrate and deploy organisational resources under dynamic situations, determines the organisation's distinct capability or competitive advantage. Moreover, through learning an organisation conceives its ability to tackle its evolving environment. Sisaye and Birnberg (2012) also mentioned that an organisation's ability to coordinate its resources to achieve organisational goals is an important capability, which enables learning. Most organisations attempt to enhance their capabilities through strategic alliances and collaborative activities. Collaboration enables organisations and its members exchange, revitalise human resources through skills and knowledge acquisition and exchange, thereby promoting learning (Genc and Iyigun 2011; Janczak 2008; Min 2015). In so doing, the ability to select appropriate learning partners is vital because it enables and supports organisations in developing new resource bundles (Inkpen and Tsang 2005).

3.5.2.5 Organisational politics and power

According to Cooper and Burgoyne (2000) and Ferdinard (2004), organisational politics shapes the learning process in organisations. Organisations are considered inherently

political and so is the process of organisational learning. Politics is therefore an internal determinant of organisational learning. Lawrence et al (2005) posit organisational politics and power defines why some organisations are better able to learn and open to useful innovation than others. Coopey and Burgoyne (2000) argue that a free and open form of politics in organisations facilitates organisational learning. This form of politics creates the “psychic space” in which organisational members are able to interact with each other in ways that enhances their self-knowledge and their capacity to utilise the knowledge in the organisational context. Organisational politics according to Danish et al (2014:119) *“is the search of self-interest of individuals in the organisation without considering their effects on the organisation to achieve its objectives”*. To Coopey and Burgoyne (2000:881) *“politics remains as the discourse that dare not speak its name... [But] enhance the prospects of organisational learning in practice”*. Ferris et al (1996: 234) define politics in organisations as informally sanctioned behaviour by organisations which produce conflict in the work environment, leading to disharmony between employees, or against the organisation. Organisational politics are informal and unofficial efforts to sell ideas, influence organisational activities, increase power or achieve other set objectives. Politics are part of organisational life, because organisations consist of different individuals with competing interests that need to be resolved and aligned to organisational purpose (Bauer and Erdogan, 2012: 594). But the challenge for organisations remains that of ensuring politics do not disrupt their learning and adaptation to new issues. Conflicting interests of organisational members do influence the interaction, channel of communication, resource allocation, acquisition, use and institutionalization of knowledge in organisations. Therefore, organisational politics facilitates or hinders an organisation’s capacity to increase its knowledge bank-learn (Lawrence et al. 2005). To this consideration, this study defines politics as the existence of conflicting interests and informal efforts influencing organisational learning.

There are several outcomes associated with politics in the workplace. Commonly identified outcomes include job satisfaction, employee turnover (Ahmad and Lemba 2010; Faye and Long 2014; Poon 2004; Singh 2012); and these outcomes were negatively associated with organisational politics. As such, one can argue that when organisational members perceive their organisation as politically charged, they develop

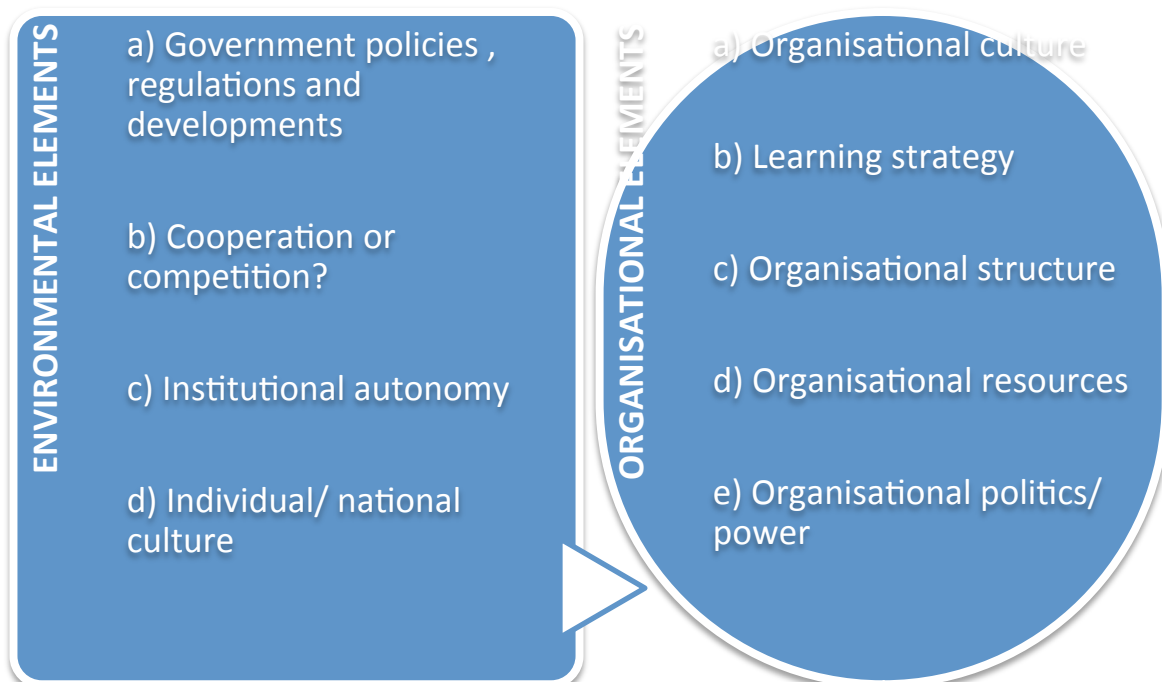
low job satisfaction and the need and desire to exit the organisation. In relation to job satisfaction, Faye and Long (2014) argue that employees who perceive their organisation's politics negatively are likely to experience job strain, stress and anxiety. Politics can also influence employees' behaviours. For instance, conflicts arising between employees can act as direct response to the development of political sub-climates, which negates collaborative practices such as knowledge transfer and group problem solving (Tirelli, 2011). Similarly, Argyris (1995) argues, conflicting perspectives of individuals gives rise to *paradigm politics*, which permits noise in the communication and information/knowledge system of organisations. Organisations however develop defensive routines to prevent the noise; but these very same defensive routines could also create barriers to information management and learning (Askvik and Espedal, 2002): considering learning is an unlimited activity. Politics also induces conflicts and subverts management-learning strategies, deterring organisational efforts of learning. In particular, Berends and Lammers (2010) present that organisational politics is a complex factor that can impede the organisational learning cycle and learning capability of an organisation. This form of politics Coopey and Burgoyne (2000: 870) termed "Pathological". By contrast, a "critical approach" to political process establishes a meaningful order on how organisations interpret and react to situations. Employees' resistance to this political process is considered an influence inflicted by organisational structure (Coopey and Burgoyne, 2000). In essence, a critical political approach offers a more orderly arrangement to organisational learning, thus minimizing conflict and disorder.

Zeiger (2000) identified the positive and negative workplace politics and their impact on organisational productivity. Organisational members who learn to navigate the politics of their organisation are more productive than those excluded from the loop are; and enjoy a positive environment. While organisations that develop negative climates and conflicts suffer adversely. If employees are driven to engage in dishonest and unethical behaviours and activities to get ahead, the organisation often experiences decreases in performance. To encourage learning and better productivity, organisations must develop and encourage a democratic political culture easy for organisational members to understand (Zeiger, 2000). Lawrence et al (2005) also classifies organisational political power into "episodic" and "systemic". Episodic power refers to

the discrete and strategic behaviours initiated by powerful self-interested organisational actors. This form of power enables influential organisational actors impact on the learning and decision making process of an organisation. Systemic political power works through organisational routines and on-going practices. Such powers “are diffused throughout the social systems that constitute organisations” (ibid: 182). Examples include the socialization and accreditation processes. The interplay between episodic and systemic power defines how organisational politics shapes the exchange of ideas and information from individuals, through groups to the organisation, and vice versa (Lawrence et al 2005). Politics could be detrimental or beneficial in nature; it drives organisational members to engage in series of productive or counterproductive acts and behaviours that may enable or cause discontinuity in organisational learning (Tirelli, 2011).

Powell (2007:4), argues that research on environmental and organisational elements (institutions) treated them as constraints on organisational behaviour. However, Meyer (2008:793) posits that aside being constraints, these elements offer opportunities: *“everywhere there are models put in place by law, ideology, culture and a variety of organisational constraints and opportunities, people are likely to install these in their organisation by way of thought or decision”*. These elements are summarised below:

Figure 3.9 Environmental and Organisational Elements Shaping OL



Despite the differences in organisational learning frameworks, perspectives and contributions, it has been noticed that majority of the scholars agreed on the noted key points:

- Organisational learning is a social process constructed within the context of the organisation- the relationship between the individual, group and organisational level.
- Organisational learning could result to or not to an observable change, desired or undesired outcomes.
- Individual and collective learning are stepping stones to organisational learning
- Learning systems and mechanisms are essential for organisational learning.
- Learning in organisations can be shaped (reinforced or hindered) by several elements and can be subjected to certain conditions
- Some argued that organisations must learn to unlearn in order to renew knowledge.

Although researchers acknowledge organisational learning, in terms of learning mechanisms facilitating OL and elements shaping OL in other organisations, fewer studies are obtainable in universities. To this end, the gap and need for the study in universities and the Nigerian context is developed in the next section.

3.6 STUDIES ON ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING IN HEIs SO FAR

Learning in universities revolved around students across the aspects of teaching, research and curriculum. Learning in universities has been conceptualised in relation to student activities (Bringle and Hatcher, 1996:2000; Haggis 2003) with little direction towards the organisational view. Currently, there is a shift from just student learning to learning comprising other internal stakeholders of universities (Brennan, 2005); and also how universities can become learning organisations. The LO (prescriptive) perspective concentrates on examining how organisations can become the “ideal form” that is how universities should learn (Tsang, 1997). As Senge’s view suggests that LO are organisations that facilitate the learning of their members and continually develop/transform themselves. This perspective mirrors the humanistic approach/models of OL. The Humanistic view builds on the potential and desire for growth as a basic assumption, considering individuals and organisations as having unlimited potentials to improve themselves and seek fulfilment (Smith, 2003).

Models of LO are primarily associated with the outcome of learning as it relates to continuous transformation or change in organisational culture, structure and the system. HEIs as central institutions in the society are responsible for learning and the advancement of knowledge. However, it is rather questionable whether these institutions practice what they preach (if they learn as organisations) (Albrecht et al 2007:404). Garvin (1993) and Patnaik et al (2013) however argue that universities do not fit as learning organisations, as *a learning organisation "is an organisation skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insights"* (Garvin 1993: 3). Garvin believes universities should not be addressed as learning organisations because they lack the required attributes needed to carry out OL (the skill of creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge). For instance, few universities have developed systematic processes for either acquiring or creating knowledge to foster their core process of learning or for applying acquired knowledge in their systems. While, Senge (1990) posits that learning organisations can reflect different features depending on the contextual setting. With regards this argument, Galbraith (1999) investigated the extent to which universities as organisations exhibit features associated with learning organisations. According to the study, universities exhibit unique features of LO (the five discipline) because of their special structure and setting. To this end, the five disciplines of LO in universities are mental muddles, personal mystery, shared fission, team lurching and system tinkering as oppose Senge's disciplines of mental models, personal mastery, shared vision, team learning and system thinking. In essence, universities could be defined as LO based on what is applicable in their system.

Defining universities as LO has over the years been considered as desirable, especially as most studies continue to investigate learning in Universities in the light of becoming LO (Dee and Leisyte, 2016). Prelipcean and Bejinaru (2016) present how universities as institutions focusing on teaching and learning can become learning organisations. In their view, universities can transform to LO through building a learning climate, creating knowledge and knowledge management. Building a favourable learning climate involves improving leadership capacity to learn, improving the structural and cultural capacity to learn (that is improving learning mechanisms and the driving culture), as organisational members are encouraged to learn if this behaviour is reflected by their leaders; and the mechanisms and culture required for learning is in place. Knowledge

creation as a LO strategy involves the transformation of individual's tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge through the use of analogies or body language, which is then shared and transferred to other organisational units through different means of communication. While knowledge management is a process that begins with the acquisition of knowledge from diverse sources; this is followed by the process of distributing acquired knowledge using both formal and informal sharing mechanisms within the organisation. The next stage, which is knowledge interpretation, is a stage where a common organisational vision is developed from shared knowledge, this is then stored in the organisational memory and changes are evident in the system, procedures and rules of the organisation. Similarly, Lewis et al (2008), in their study argue that within universities, there are grounds for the development of learning organisations because these institutions are explicitly and implicitly built on ideas relating to individual learning and learning forms the primary reason for the existence of universities. But Portfelt (2006) argues that although universities activities are related to learning such as teaching, research, supervision and innovation, this does not form the sufficient condition to label universities as learning organisations.

According to Chiang (2005), building a LO is crucial for organisational adaptation in the ever changing environment. Considering that in the 21st century, universities are challenged to do more- offer more services, balance stakeholders' demands, to become entrepreneurial-. And in response to the demands, universities are expected to set goals substantial in managing these demands and challenges; and that entails universities being LO as those organisations distinguished from traditional organisations through their ability to continually learn and strive for excellence. But for universities to become LO, their learning according to Chiang (2005) must be supported by major changes in their culture, structure and systems for success, similar to Argyris and Schon's notion of double-loop learning. It is therefore arguable that LO are those who are capable of learning with alterations in their culture, structure and system, but learning does result in this form of changes even when such organisations are considered non- learning organisations. Bui and Baruch (2013) in their study presented two reasons why universities should become LO. Bearing in mind that universities are not profit-making organisations, it is crucial that universities should consider becoming LO as they wish to be true "temple of knowledge". This is because most highly ranked universities have

resources, from human to technological resources and facilities; therefore they do not have to struggle for resources to become LO. In essence, universities have the *“DNA of Learning organisations that they inherit from one generation to the next to maintain them in the process of becoming LO”* (Bui & Baruch, 2013: 233). Secondly, universities should become LO as most universities are able to continually expand their activities to accommodate students and staff expectations and manage national politics and this enables them to gain prestigious and competitive advantages among other universities (Patterson, 1999). Similarly, Retna and Ng (2016) note that becoming LO seems the ultimate choice for universities to survive, develop and build competitive edges.

From a different point of view, Baks (2012: 164) raised that *“today’s [universities] face a dilemma in that they support a curriculum that teaches the importance of LO, while at the same time struggling to become them”*. However, the struggle and challenges experienced by universities is posed by three key factors; organisational culture, organisational structure and political challenge. These factors are triggered by government grants/funds, policies and structural changes. Therefore, the success of HEIs becoming LO is highly dependent on these challenging factors. Despite the increasing interest in the LO field in universities, its conceptualization remains unclear. Mulford (2001) defines the LO as an organisation that shape and re-shapes itself in ways that both the organisation and its members continually learn from each other, from their experiences and from the environments. In this organisation, learning results in improvement or the solving of problems. While to Stoll and Kools (2017) the LO is an organisation that establishes conducive conditions for learning and uses its learning to adapt to the environment similar to the explanation of OL as presented by Carmeli and Sheaffer (2008) that learning is not just about the process that enables organisational adaptation, but it is concerned with the existence of a conducive environment for learning. Researchers need to distinguish between the activities and processes of OL and the LO, this is because in the research literature on universities, scholars commonly adopt the concept of LO in investigating learning in organisations and these terms are often used synonymously. Although Lewis et al (2008) argue that organisational learning is the process that leads to LO, while Ortenblad (2005) views LO as a metaphor, as learning in organisations is a continuous process and not a defined end. Learning therefore occurs in all organisations, following different paths. In essence, universities

learn as organisations utilising their unique process and path. Similar to the thoughts of Dill (1999:146), that though universities are often considered as learning organisations; but this does not mean that universities cannot learn. Universities engage in learning, not because they are LO but because learning is a process that occurs through their activities in which different units participate. However, Tsang (1997) mentioned that models that discuss LO have paid less attention to examining the nature and process of organisational learning. Similarly, Lipshitz et al (2002) argue that models of LO seem unrealistic as all organisations are learning systems and learning should be investigated in terms of the process.

Albrecht et al (2007) in their study, argue that organisational learning in universities occur as a process. The process is often triggered by the need to broaden organisational knowledge, from where organisational actors of the university carry out the learning process through their communication with the internal and external environment. Knowledge acquired is then disseminated (through organisational language, values and formal systems) and interpreted for organisational use. However, the knowledge base of the organisation becomes modified if the learning process is successful and this depends on factors influencing the process. However, very few studies investigate OL as a process. The competitive environment of universities throughout the world appears to be developing incentives for universities to engage in OL effectively. Differentiating between learning in business organisations and universities, Bimbaum (2000:105) argues that the comparison between universities and businesses on OL does not hold because each organisation serves a fundamentally different purpose, a distinction most reformers fail to consider. He compares the question of why universities cannot be more like business organisations to the question, why can a cat not be a dog? While businesses are driven by profits and must constantly adapt to customer demands, universities are motivated by a core set of principles that must be conserved if they are to sustain their societal significance. A major reason why learning in universities and that of businesses cannot be compared lies in the fact that business and government organisations are bureaucratized, formalized, hierarchical, and tightly coupled. Whereas, universities are professional organisations- they are *loosely coupled systems* in which managers/ leaders with restricted authority provide support for relatively autonomous specialists (Albrecht et al 2007; Lamal 2001). Nevertheless, Chatterton and

Goddard (2000:494) suggest universities can also stimulate a shift from a loosely coupled institutional form to a managerial one through learning.

In universities, OL provides a sustainable avenue for transformation and an opportunity for continuous renewal from within. In essence, universities can examine and exploit what they have already learned, likewise innovating, solving problems, and developing learning mechanisms and knowledge to face evolving challenges. While OL fosters a proactive stance instead of a reactive position, universities are used to constant, externally imposed changes and innovation, often mandated or induced by external forces, such as legislatures, that may be contradictory or incompatible with the institution's belief and goals (Lamal, 2001:67). Universities have become skillful at reacting and adapting to societal demands, while less proficient at taking proactive positions made possible by OL. OL constitutes ongoing learning with a view to internal implementation of changes as improvements backing the organisation's objectives. Individuals learn either deliberately or accidentally from numerous sources and universities can learn from the collective experiences, views, and capabilities of individuals (Kolb and Kolb, 2005). Similarly, Bauma (2005:25) asserts that universities learn through their institutional actors who are capable of applying their practices as communities of researchers to the institution itself. She also identified that organisational learning is promoted among groups in universities based on the presents of three conditions: the presence of new ideas, the cultivation of doubt in existing knowledge and practices, and the development and transfer of information among organisational members. As learning becomes more collaborative, so must the professional development of educational staff, which needs to foster professional networks and learning organisations within schools.

The capacity and motivation for organisational learning depend to an extent on the larger institutional structures within which universities operate. These include, among other things, the roles of school boards, governments and unions; the role of markets and competition in the funding of schools; and the perceptions, concerns and opportunities for contribution of stakeholders. Understanding the factors that either promote or impede learning by and within educational organisations is an essential element in developing realistic innovations and improving education (Spencer, 2010). Collinson et al (2010:110) in an empirical study suggest that the culture of learning of

most universities exist mainly in a single-loop phase that does not encourage creativity and innovation among academic staff. The study further identified interrelated conditions that may foster OL in educational systems: prioritizing learning for all members; facilitating the dissemination of information, knowledge, skills, and insights; attending to human relationships; fostering inquiring; promoting democratic governance; and providing for member's self-fulfillment. While, Imants (2003) investigating OL in schools presents critical factors for effective OL: steering information about teaching and learning, and encouraging interaction among employees. Further stressing that learning in schools is reinforced by external and internal factors. The effectiveness of learning according to Beltman (2009) is influenced by individualism, leadership styles, and staff's personal dispositions, departmental cultures of collaboration, school management and national regulations (in Hamzah et al 2011).

3.7 ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING IN NIGERIA

Several studies in Nigeria present organisational learning in the light of training and development, knowledge and information management, competitive advantage and innovation. According to Olaniyan and Ojo (2008) when employees are not trained or empowered, it is often a sign of an organisation's incompetence, inefficiency, ineffectiveness and inability to learn, which adversely affects the growth of the organisation. Confirming the relevance of training, Aroge (2012) and Oribabor (2000) submitted that training and employee development aims at developing and enhancing human, technical, conceptual, and managerial competences for the furtherance of both individual and organisational growth. Similarly, Obi-Anike and Ekwe (2014) affirm that training is an important element for improving organisational effectiveness and knowledge, simply because it increases both individual and organisational competencies, reconciling the gap between what is known and what should be known (learnt). Training is expected to generate the enthusiasm for learning-create new ideas and knowledge- which could be mutually beneficial to both employees and the organisation (Fajana et al, 2011). However, Fajana et al (2011) confront the major challenge of training and development in Nigerian organisations to be "restrictive", being that trainings offered by the organisations are strictly job related and considered to be exclusively beneficial to the organisation in return without considering the

learning needs of organisational members. This therefore hinders the acquisition of other relevant skills and knowledge by employees, as it tends not to relate to their job role/need; thus might be irrelevant.

While learning might not always be beneficial, Oisamoje and Idubor (2013) suggest that organisations should consider learning as a continuous process and not just a onetime event, because learning entails not just training but a process of generating, disseminating, interpreting, storing and utilizing information for organisational purpose. Based on this process, Oisamoje and Idubor revealed that organisational learning is practiced in the Edo State Judiciary of Nigeria but to a certain extent. This is due to their claim that knowledge/information acquired from training and seminars are hardly applied to the organisation as such knowledge is mostly irrelevant within their job scope and fails to serve its purpose. In essence, only the employees learn but the organisation does not; similar to the argument of Schulz (2001) that in some cases organisational members know more than their organisation. Along the same line, Ejim-Eze (2013) examined the four-stage process of Huber in selected automobile firms in Nigeria, identifying the existence of these stages with more concentration on factors that influence organisational learning and eco-innovation respectively. The research presents that the factors embodied in learning orientation, levels of learning, the learning environment and sources of knowledge influence the learning and eco-innovation of firms. It can therefore be argued that learning in organisations could occur to different extent with or without being “organisational”. Slightly different, Umoh and Amah (2013) argue that the acquisition, storage, sharing and utilization of knowledge enhance organisational resilience, resourcefulness and organisational learning. Reflecting that the ability of an organisation to be resilient, productive or to learn relies on how well it manages its knowledge. While Ohiorenaya and Eboreime (2014) gathered that the manner and way by which knowledge management is constructed and practiced in universities determines how the organisation performs. This they captured that the kind of programs designed in relation to knowledge acquisition and utilization determines the different outcomes to be experienced. For instance, if innovative programs are organised, where the university taps and uses the knowledge, then the university’s outcome should be innovation-related.

Contributing towards organisational learning and innovation in Nigeria, Abiola (2013) argues that organisational learning not only fosters innovation of SMEs but it also boosts their financial performance and competitive advantage. This is highly dependent on certain organisational learning components (system orientation, climate for learning, knowledge acquisition, sharing and utilization) examined in the organisations; and the learning orientation is also found to be basic for organisational learning. Similarly, Oyelaran-Oyeyinka and Lal (2006) stressed that SMEs in developing nations can enhance their competitive edge and survival only through learning and becoming innovative in their operations.

Although learning is vital and important to organisations for different reasons, Nakpodia (2009) points that factors that influence the learning in organisations are equally important because they determine the extent and nature of learning that can take place; thus they should be considered. Nakpodia however identified fragmentation, reactivity and competition are the major constraints of learning in organisations. To Oisamoje and Idubor (2013) influences of organisational learning in public organisations in Nigeria reside both within and external to the organisation. These they identified as strategy, culture, structure, environment climate, technology and human resources. Nnadi et al (2012) however examined the influences of knowledge management, which in turn affects the learning of agricultural organisations. Amongst these influences, include low-level ICT readiness, high level of poverty in rural areas, high level of illiterate farmers and high cost of communication services. Nakpodia (2009) also conceptually reviewed the implication and challenges of Nigerian universities as learning organisations. Where he stressed that the major challenge of the Nigerian universities inability to function as learning organisations lies in making their learning more concrete and institutionalized (considering their plight in attracting and retaining more competent staff highly committed to the future of the universities leadership development). The table below shows the summary of studies on OL from different perspectives in HEIs and Nigeria:

Table 3.5 Summary of Research on Organisational Learning in HEIs and the Nigerian Context

Authors	Research Approach	Research contribution	Research conclusions
Portfelt (2006)	The Learning	Examines the	The university's inner life is

	organisation perspective	characteristics of LO in Karlstad University.	not in harmony with the characteristics of Senge's theoretical model of LO
Lewis et al (2008)	The Senge's LO perspective	Focuses on investigating how public universities become LO by creating continuous learning opportunities, promoting inquiry and dialogue, encouraging collaboration and team learning, establishing systems to capture and share learning, empowering people towards a collective vision and connecting the organisation to its environment	The paper proposed the need for radical re-thinking and re-engineering of the core function of public universities in developing countries
Patnaik et al (2013)	The Garvin's LO perspective	Presents an empirical study on organisational learning in Indian HEIs	OL is below the expected level in both public and private sectors. Significant difference exists between the public and private HEIs in terms of the extent as well as dimensions of OL.
Baks (2012)	The Senge's LO perspective	Explores a department in UK higher education based on Senge's five characteristics of LO.	LO characteristics were present to a limited extent within the department and result showed a variation in the impact level of the five characteristics between administrative and academic groups, as well as between the new and old members of staff.
Prelipcean & Bejinaru (2016)	The Garvin's LO perspective	Substantiates the fuzzy paradigm of universities as learning organisations both from a scientific and pragmatic perspective, by focusing on universities aiming at continuous adaptation to the changing external business environment.	Universities as providers of management education, have both opportunities and critical responsibilities to adopt practices associated with the ideal and the concept of LO.
Stoll & Kools (2017)	The Senge's LO perspective	Reviews existing literature in attempt to work towards a common	There is a general agreement that HEIs as learning organisations are necessities

		understanding of HEIs as learning organisations today which is both solidly founded in the literature and recognisable currently by researchers, practitioners and policy makers in many countries. But this is not just a theoretical exercise.	for dealing with the rapidly changing external environment of these institutions, regardless of context.
Chiang (2005)	The Senge's LO perspective	Investigates if the concept of LO which is based on western corporate culture will work in academe in Taiwan	Findings provide evidence of a positive relationship between culture and learning, and changes brought about through team learning. Academics are hard to re-educate because they are assumed to have their own subjective logic and personal interests based upon their previous studies and firmly held beliefs.
Dill (1999)	The LO perspective	Reviews the adaptations in organisational structure and governance reported by universities attempting to improve the quality of their teaching and learning process.	Universities have long been regarded as centres of knowledge creation and application for the larger society, but not as learning organisations developing and transferring knowledge for the improvement of their own basic processes.
Bimbaum (2000)	Social approach	Examines the diversity scorecard project to promote OL among faculty, staff and administrators about inequities in educational outcomes for African American and Latino students on their campuses.	Institutional actors are capable of promoting OL in their institution through communities of practice as well as research. For instance, faculties who conduct research in the study of organisations, and many other fields can use their findings for the assessment and improvement of their own institutions.
Collinson et al (2006)	Behavioural approach	Identifies six interrelated conditions that appear to foster OL and provide a practical illustration of	OL has the potential to help HEIs renew themselves from the inside out and to improve learning, teaching and

		the conditions in the form of a fictional HEIs created from examples in the literature	leading in school systems
Imants (2005)	Social approach	Focuses on how staff professional communities can play a role in OL and professional development.	Opportunities for steering intentional OL in HEIs context are only weak, and that a balance should be created in the school between diverging conditions for OL.
Studies of Organisational learning in Nigerian Organisations			
Abiola, (2013)	Behavioural	OL, innovativeness, and financial performance of SMEs in Nigeria	Positive relationship between OL components and Innovativeness and financial performance
Umoh and Amah (2013)	Knowledge management	Knowledge acquisition resilience in Nigerian manufacturing organisations	Positive relationship between the constructs and knowledge acquisition enhances OL
Nnadi et al (2012)	Situated	ICT for agriculture knowledge management in Nigeria: Lessons and strategies for improvement	They identified challenges and strategies for improving agricultural knowledge sharing, exchange, and dissemination.
Dada and Akpadiaha (2012)	Cognitive	An assessment of formal learning processes in construction industry organisations in Nigeria	The findings indicate that information collection was ranked highest, while analysis was ranked least.
Ohioorenaya and Eboreime (2014)	Behavioural	KM practices and performance in Nigerian Universities	Different KM practices results in different organisational outcomes
Nakpodia (2009)	Humanistic approach	Implication and challenges of Nigerian universities as learning organisations	Structure, composition, response and competition are major challenges capable of distorting their effort to becoming learning organisations
Epetimehin and Ekundayo (2011)	Strategic/ humanistic	Organisational knowledge: survival strategy for Nigerian Insurance Industry.	Preventive measures on how to retain and avoid knowledge loss.
Olaniya and Ojo (2008), Oyitso and Olomukoro (2012), Okotoni and Erero (2005), Malaolu and	Behavioural	On employee/staff training and development.	Employee productivity, effectiveness, and other positive outcomes. The costs and benefits of employee development. Relationship between

Ogbuabor (2013), Obisi (2011), Aroge (2012), Ejioge (2000), Sriyan (1997)			employee training and other constructs.
Oyelaran-Oyeyinka and Lal (2006)	Strategic	Learning new technologies by SMEs in developing countries.	Clear evidence of increasing complexity in the adoption of ICT among developing firms. And firm performance is highly associated with learning capabilities.
Omatayo (2015)	Knowledge management	Knowledge management as an important tool in organisational management: a review of literature	KM is a key driver of organisational performance and a critical tool for organisational survival, competitiveness and profitability.
Yasar et al (2014)	Behavioural	Analysis of relationships between organisational learning capacity and organisational performance: a case study of Banking sector in Nigeria	The paper offers practical recommendations of how organisational performance can be improved by improving the OL in the organisation.
Oluremi (2013)	Human resource	Enhancing educational effectiveness in Nigeria through teacher's professional development	Staff orientation is critical for educational effectiveness.

3.8 ESTABLISHING THE GAP IN THE LITERATURE ON ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING.

This section concentrates on identified gap in the literature on organisational learning and draws on the major perspectives/approaches on OL, which sets the grounds for this study. This study therefore attempts to fill identified gaps in the literature on OL in universities and the developing nation context.

The behavioural approach of learning concentrates on examining the relationship between learning and change in organisational practices or routines, by considering changes in them as a reflection of learning. In addition, this approach uses organisational performance such as efficiency, speed and productivity as indicators of organisational learning. However, for organisations to be learning organisations, a form

of change or improvement must be observed. In essence, learning needs to be measured according to this approach (Kim 2003). However, Argote (2013:32) suggests, *“When using behavioural approaches to measure learning, one has to be sensitive to control for factors that might affect changes in behaviour. For example, changes in routines might be driven by regulatory changes rather than experience”*. Examples of models of this approach include; Argyris and Schon’s learning model, where learning results in the modification of organisational members’ routines or practices due to the detection and correction of error; learning curve of Dutton and Thomas (1984), Muth model (1986), Huberman model (2001) and Fang model (2011). Smith (2003) stressed that the behavioural approach’s account of learning resulting to change is limited, as organisations do learn without any associated observable change or outcome but this learning purely occurs in organisational members’ cognition and organisational memory and as a means of adaptation.

Dodgson (1993) argues that learning in organisations is not often related to a corresponding change in behaviour or does learning always lead to organisational efficiency. Rather learning in organisation can occur as a cognitive process without changes in behaviour. To this end, Huber (1991) argues that an organisation is said to be learning when one or more of its units –organisational members, departments- acquire knowledge that is considered potentially useful to the organisation. The cognitive approach is therefore concerned with the process of learning from the individual level to the organisational level, and not necessarily the outcome. Huber (1991) and DiBella et al (1996) model of OL centres around four stages that cut across individual, group and organisational level. In their cognitive models, learning involves the processing of information- that is information acquisition, distribution, interpretation and organisational memory. Dixon (1992) extends this model by incorporating the sources of each stage of the process. While, Crossan et al’s (1999) 4I model describes how individual learning becomes organisational through the collective and social mechanisms of intuiting, interpreting, integrating and institutionalizing. According to this model, the process of OL becomes complete when knowledge generated is institutionalised. Despite these contributions, these models remain vague about underlying arrangements that facilitate OL, therefore leaving important questions unanswered such as; how do organisational members acquire knowledge? How do

organisational members collectively make sense of acquired knowledge or information? (Kump et al, 2015).

The structural approach, a more recent approach to learning analyses how organisations as non-living systems can systematically process information using non-metaphorical attributes that enables them acquire, interpret, share, store and retrieve information relevant for organisational use. These attributes according to Shrivastava (1983) and Bushe (1987) are parallel learning systems that aid organisations acquire, disseminate and make sense of knowledge relevant for decision making. While Cirella et al (2016), Popper and Lipshitz (2000) and Lipshitz et al (2007) consider these attributes as observable institutional arrangements that enable organisations learn through processing relevant information. These arrangements range from structures, forums to procedures facilitating social interaction, exchange and the acquisition of information from different sources. While, this approach answers questions posed by the weaknesses of the cognitive approach, studies on OLMs are still limited. For instance, Kars- Unluoglu and Easterby-Smith (2011) argue that despite the significant contribution of OLMs in understanding OL, few studies are carried out in relation to this. Schechter (2000) and Schechter and Feldman (2011) studied the meaning and measurement of OLMs in elementary schools, further investigating OLMs used by academic staff in special education high schools in facilitating OL, which revealed that OLMs employed by these staff for learning are arrangements and structures that form part of the institutions and are unique to their context. Ellis and Shpielberg (2003) looked into the relationship between technological uncertainty among organisational leaders and the intensity of use of OLMs. From a different view, Mitki (1997) explored the role of OLMs in overcoming the barriers to continuous improvement and argues that organisation's structural inertia seems to be a crucial barrier to improvement effort; thus the need for parallel learning structural mechanisms. While Drach-Zahavy and Pud (2011), examined the effectiveness of OLMs in team learning in the light of error detection and correction during medication administration. Further proposing that investigating OLMs would shed light on factors promoting and inhibiting OL, which are currently unspecified with regards how acquired knowledge is discussed and reflected upon, who is involved in this learning behaviour, and where is this behaviour carried out; inside or outside the boundary of organisational functioning? As learning

mechanisms provide the required structure to identify and reflect on the organisation's environments in order to assess its functioning in relation to its internal and external environment. Although OLMs are investigated from diverse perspectives and in different organisations, little focus is given to OLMs at organisational level and in universities- involving all organisational levels that is academic, administrative staff and students.

As organisations are capable of processing information at different levels (through the use of social arrangements); and modifying their mental structures or organisational memory, the interactions and exchange that enables learning is usually situated within specific social cultural settings as argued by scholars of the social/situated learning approach. Gherardi et al (1998: 6) present that learning is closely linked to the social context in which it takes place. *"In order to understand, the cognitive competences and their acquisition, it is relevant to explore specific contexts of activities and social practices in which they occur"*. Similarly, Glynn et al (1994) argues that OL occurs in a context that is the organisation and environment in which the organisation is embedded. The environmental context includes the institutional field of the organisation that can vary along different dimensions (uncertainty, volatility) and this affects the knowledge/information the organisation acquires. While the organisational context is the internal characteristics of the organisation such as the strategy, culture. This context interacts with the information acquired to create knowledge; thus enabling learning. Models of situated learning approach focus on investigating how learning occurs in organisation through community of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wang 1995), the relationship between work and learning (Higgins et al 2012; Kuhn & Marsick 2005; Lines et al 2011). While other models examine the influence of internal context like culture, structure, trust, leadership (Cho 2007; Curado 2006; Martinez-Leon and Martinez-Garcia 2011) or external context like competitors, customers and government on OL (Bennett & Howlett 1992; Borrás 2011; Farrukh & Waheed 2015, but an integrative and holistic model of both internal and external elements shaping OL is limited. Bapuji and Crossan (2004) however argues that the conceptual and practical limitations of organisational and environmental elements inhibiting or fostering OL can be overcome by revisiting some organisational theories and incorporating the idea that organisations learn heterogeneously. Similarly, Rashman et al (2009) and Lines (2005) encourage the need

for further study in elements shaping OL as sector-specific and organisational elements likely to shape OL exist.

3.8.1 NARRATIVE DISCUSSION

While much emphasis is placed on how higher education institutions become learning organisation (Garvin, 1993; Patnaik et al 2013; Malike et al 2012), few studies examine how these organisations learn as special institutions considering that all organisations learn. OL is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, that is situational and context specific, it appears that a *one-size fit all* framework of organisational learning is inconsistent with reality (Scott, 2011: 14). In essence, OL is uniquely experienced by all organisations. Universities are large, complex systems with distinct components, which share external challenges with other organisations but how organisational learning occurs (that is how individual learning becomes organisational) in these institutions remain understudied as presented above. Similarly, Dee and Leisyte (2016: 333-334) stressed that “*given the paucity of research in OL in higher education, any original empirical study would likely make a contribution in this area...while OL research in corporate and non-profit settings can inform practices in universities, higher education leaders need studies that are grounded in the unique characteristics of universities. Tenure systems, shared governance, loose coupling and a highly professionalised workforce are likely to influence the OL process*”. While studies by Ellis & Shpielberg (2003); Kar-Unluoglu and Easterby-Smith (2011); Popper & Lipshitz (1998); Shrivastava (1983) have acknowledged the relevance of OLMs in understanding the process of learning in organisations, studies on OLMs in universities remain limited. For instance, Albrecht et al (2007) proposed the need for more studies on OL in universities by focusing on structures capable of fostering learning and factors influencing learning in universities, while Boyce (2003) argues that universities like other organisations have unique mechanisms they employ in learning as organisations; thus the emphasis on the need to investigate these learning mechanisms. Organisations facilitate learning with organisational learning mechanisms termed differently (Shrivastava 1983; Ellis & Shpielberg 2003; Kar-Unluoglu and Easterby-Smith 2011; Popper & Lipshitz 1998). Organisational Learning becomes well understood with learning platforms/systems/structures available in organisations unique to different organisations- they are structural, procedural or cultural in nature. As much as studies on organisational learning mechanisms provide insight on how

individual learning becomes organisational learning (the process), researchers also recommend the need for more studies on elements shaping (inhibitors and enablers) organisational learning (Popper and Lipshitz, 2000) in universities.

This study therefore argues that the consideration of structural arrangements and organisational/environmental contexts on OL provides a holistic picture of mechanisms enabling OL and elements shaping the process of learning in universities. By investigating OLMs, practitioners can identify the learning platforms/systems and structures utilised by special organisations like universities in facilitating their learning process. This will also provide knowledge of how these mechanisms are operated and implemented in universities. While most studies examine either organisational or environmental elements shaping OL in other organisations, only few studies in universities are obtained. This study examining both organisational and environmental elements shaping OL in universities in Nigeria will create an understanding on how these elements foster or hinder the process of learning; thus reflecting the influence of the internal and external contexts on an internal process-organisational learning. Considering the above gap, it is undeniable relevant to research into the learning in universities as organisations.

3.9 FRAME OF REFERENCE

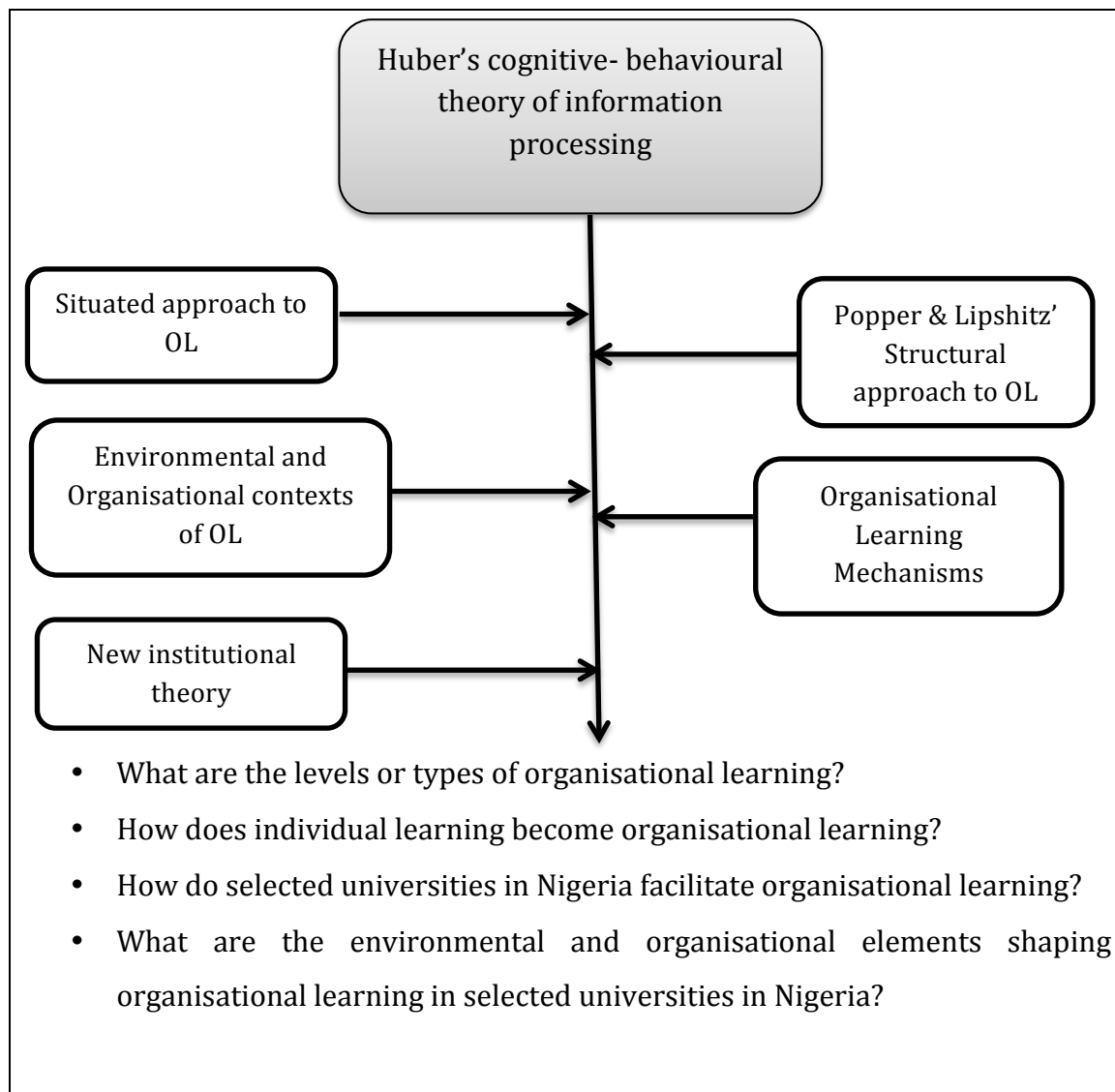
Information processing theory from inception is an individual learning theory based on the ideas of Atkinson and Shrifin (1968); Craik and Lockhart (1972) and Bransford (1979) who viewed the theory as a cognitive approach to understanding how the human mind process and transforms sensory information. The approach assumes that information acquired from the environment is subject to mental processes beyond a simple stimulus-response pattern. And this process requires control mechanisms to enable the encoding, processing, transformation, storage, retrieval and utilization of information (Huitt, 2003). Huber (1991:89) and DiBella et al (1996) however extended this notion to an organisational level, which according to them information processing of organisations involves, the acquisition, distribution, interpretation and storage of information; and these processes are usually interpersonal or social. Additionally, Huber stressed that information processing results to learning, but does not often lead to organisational effectiveness and observable changes. Rather an organisation learns when its members are learning in different ways while collaborating with each other to

ensure their actions are aligned for the good of the whole organisation. This learning is therefore a process that involves a series of related activities that are repeated. According to Huber and DiBella et al's theory, learning becomes organisational when acquired information is disseminated, interpreted and stored in organisational memory in ways that it can be accessed and used for organisational purpose. Ribbens (1997) further argues that the most appropriate way of analysing OL is by examining the information processing base of an organisation because an organisation's knowledge base is the outcome of its learning. Despite the theory's broad scope, it failed to capture the mechanisms that oversee the process. This Popper and Lipshitz (1998:2000:2002) contributed but in the light of error detection and correction. Their structural approach of organisational learning examines the issue of anthropomorphism in organisational learning, focusing on mechanisms that facilitate learning in organisations. OLMs are structural and procedural arrangements permitting organisations to process information, what Giddens referred to as "social structures", which are established traditions and ways of doing things (Lamsal, 2012). Learning becomes organisational using these mechanisms when organisational members learning and experiences are shared and analysed by others, making it the knowledge of the entire organisation through dissemination to other units which then becomes embedded in operating procedures (Schechter and Feldman, 2011). Learning mechanisms also offer organisational members the opportunity to define the forum, place and moments for processing information collectively (Popper & Lipshitz, 2000).

Lipshitz et al (2002:91) however assert that *"consequently, organisational learning cannot be properly understood without using social, political and cultural lenses in addition to cognitive lenses"*. In essence *"organisational learning needs to go beyond the structural elements to address those factors which are likely to promote or inhibit organisational learning"* (ibid: 84). In response to this, institutional theory of Scott and Zilber has been introduced into the study as a step towards understanding the interplay between contexts, actors and actions in organisational learning from the above perspectives and a means of building an integrative framework of OL theories and Institutional theory. Institutional theory is typically not perceived as a theory of organisational learning, rather it has been used traditionally to explain organisational stability and isomorphism. Several studies however have applied institutional theory to

the study of organisations and change (Hoffman 1999; D'aunno et al 2000; Hanson 2001; Coggshall 2004; Deegan & Unerman 2011; Palthe 2014) with little attention paid to organisational learning. Institutional theory provides useful framework that could be used to investigate organisational learning as learning is situated in contexts; and contexts signals the elements, pressures and dynamics that shapes this process both within and outside the organisational environment (Lounsbury, 2008). These elements stem from both the internal and external context of organisations. Central to this theory is the fact that organisations achieve legitimacy through social constructions. Coggshall (2004: 13) defines legitimacy "*as generalised perception or assumption that the action of an entity is desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system or norms, values, beliefs and definitions*". According to Meyer and Rowan (1977: 341) institutionalism looks at the process by which social processes and obligations become rule-like status in social thought and actions. While Scott (1987: 496) considers institutionalism as a social process by which individuals accept shared definition of reality- the process by which repeated actions are given similar interpretation by individuals and others. Cultural influences such as norms, expectations and beliefs reinforce the repetition of these actions, while at times social influences such as imitating other organisations inhibits the actions. In essence, institutions are dynamic, they are created, maintained, changed and managed (Palthe, 2014); and in this study they are considered as elements shaping OL. The literature review in this chapter is synthesized into a conceptual framework, which is used to guide this research. The proposed version builds on the identified processes of organisational learning by Huber (1991); it also attempts to incorporate organisational learning mechanisms identified by Popper and Lipshitz (1998:2000) and Drach-Zahavy and Pud (2010) that facilitate organisational learning. Finally, the institutional theory of Scott (1995; 2001) and Zilber (2002; 2012) are captured in the framework as the elements (environmental and organisational) shaping organisational learning below:

Figure 3.10 Frame of Reference



The conceptual framework expands upon the simple version of organisational learning presented (in figure 3.8). The four stages of information processing-information acquisition, distribution, interpretation and organisational memory are evident within the criteria to establish the relationship between the individual, group and organisational levels of learning. It also draws on organisational learning mechanisms, which are the institutionalised structures, and *procedures* that permit organisations to acquire, analyse, disseminate, store and use information relevant to the operations of the organisations and its members (Popper and Lipshitz, 2000). OLMs were also used to understand organisational learning in the work of Kar- Unluoglu and Easterby-Smith (2011). Furthermore, the framework introduces the regulative, normative and

cognitive-cultural pillars of Scott (1995) found external to an organisation and Zilber (2002; 2012) organisational elements found within the organisation (culture, structure, learning strategy, resources and politics), which shapes organisational learning. Palthe (2004) argues that institutional elements consist of distinctive values that shape interactions of organisational members. Effects arising from these elements can be observed both internally and externally, and operate to promote common meaning on what is appropriate organisational behaviour. The components of this conceptual framework serve a critical role in the case study methodology (Yin, 2009) adopted by the present study, as it shapes the approach to the research process and analysis.

Table 3.6 Summary of Research questions and interview questions from literature

Aims	Research questions		Literature citation
To investigate the levels of learning in organisations and the link between levels in order to establish what makes learning “organisational”.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •What are the levels or types of organisational learning? •How does individual learning become organisational learning? 		Yeo (2002), Moynihan & Landuyt (2009), Easterby-smith (1997:2002), Kim (1993), Forehlich et al (2014), Argyris & Schon (1996), Huber (1991), Dixon (1999), Oinas (1999), Bushe (2009), Isaacs (1993), Kolb & Kolb (2005), Hayes & Allinson (1998), Crossan et al (1999), Crossan et al (2013), Klein (1989), Wiseman (2007), Huberman (1995), Dixon (1992)
To identify organisational mechanisms facilitating organisational learning in universities in Nigeria.	How do universities in Nigeria facilitate OL?	What OLMs does your institution employ in learning? RQ2 Why does your institution employ these mechanisms? RQ2 Who is/are responsible for instituting, implementing and operating these	Shrivastava (1983), DiBella et al (1996), Bushe (1987), Lipshitz (1998:2000), Lipshitz et al (2002), Ghosal (1987), Kar-unluoglu & Easterby-smith (2011), Alavi & Leidner (2001), Oliver (2009), Kane and Alavi (2007), Ellis & Shpielberg (2003),

		mechanisms? How? RQ2 What does it cost your institution to implement/use these mechanisms? RQ2 How do you develop on these mechanisms? RQ2	Schechter & Atarchi (2013), Drach-Zahavy & Pud (2010), Wiseman (2007), Cirella et al (2016), Schechter & Feldman (2010), Schechter & Asher (2012)
•To examine the environmental and organisational elements shaping organisational learning in universities in Nigeria.	What and how are the organisational and environmental elements of organisational learning in Nigeria in Nigeria?	How do you define OL elements? RQ3 Can you describe the environmental elements of OL in your university? RQ3 Can you describe the organisational elements of OL in your university? RQ3 How do these elements shape OL in your university?	Nevis et al (1995), Barette et al (2012), Choe (2004), Tyre & Von Hippel (1997), Argote (1999), Cox & Jones (2005), Carroll et al (2004), Pham & Swierizek (2006), Hamzah et al (2011), Martin & Terblanche (2003), Cheema et al (2013), Hulbert & Anderson (2008), Jan & Annette (2009), Lawrence et al (2005), Rusch (2005), Beltman (2009), Yeo (2002), Wah (2013), Gilanina et al (2013), Lopez et al (2006), Dauber et al (2011), Dimovski & Skerlavaj (2004), Kantén et al (2015), Martin & Martin (2002), Martinez-Leon & Martinez-Garcia (2011)

3.10 SUMMARY

A literature reviewed has been done in attempt to understand Higher education-definition, forms and classification based on the country context (Nigeria). The history of universities, structure, policy and influence of principal regulatory bodies and unions has also been discussed. This study also reviewed literature on the conceptualization of organisational learning and scholars' perspectives of how learning occurs organisationally. It found among others that organisational learning was best

understood as a process starting from individual learning towards a relationship between individuals and groups and the organisation. Individuals were considered the basic but not the sufficient point for organisational learning. Individual learning processes have been captured. Furthermore, how organisational learning happens, the cycle and models of how organisations learn have been looked into, with Huber and DiBella et al process model selected as the mirror for understanding OL in universities because it is wide in scope (a combination of other OL frameworks) and little empirical studies on it in service organisations has been achieved. The study also reviewed the literature on organisational learning mechanisms as the systems capable of facilitating organisational learning, with elements shaping the process of organisational learning. The literature also covers organisational learning in HEIs with high focus on the Learning organisation because most of the literature concentrated on the prescriptive view, but scholars from a descriptive view consider OL as an all-inclusive process where each component of HEIs plays a critical part in the whole process. Furthermore, a summary of the research questions, the frame of reference for this study in figure 3.10 above and the interview questions in Table 3.6 below drawn from literature review are presented. The next chapter conveys the methodology adopted in this research in achieving the aims and objectives of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

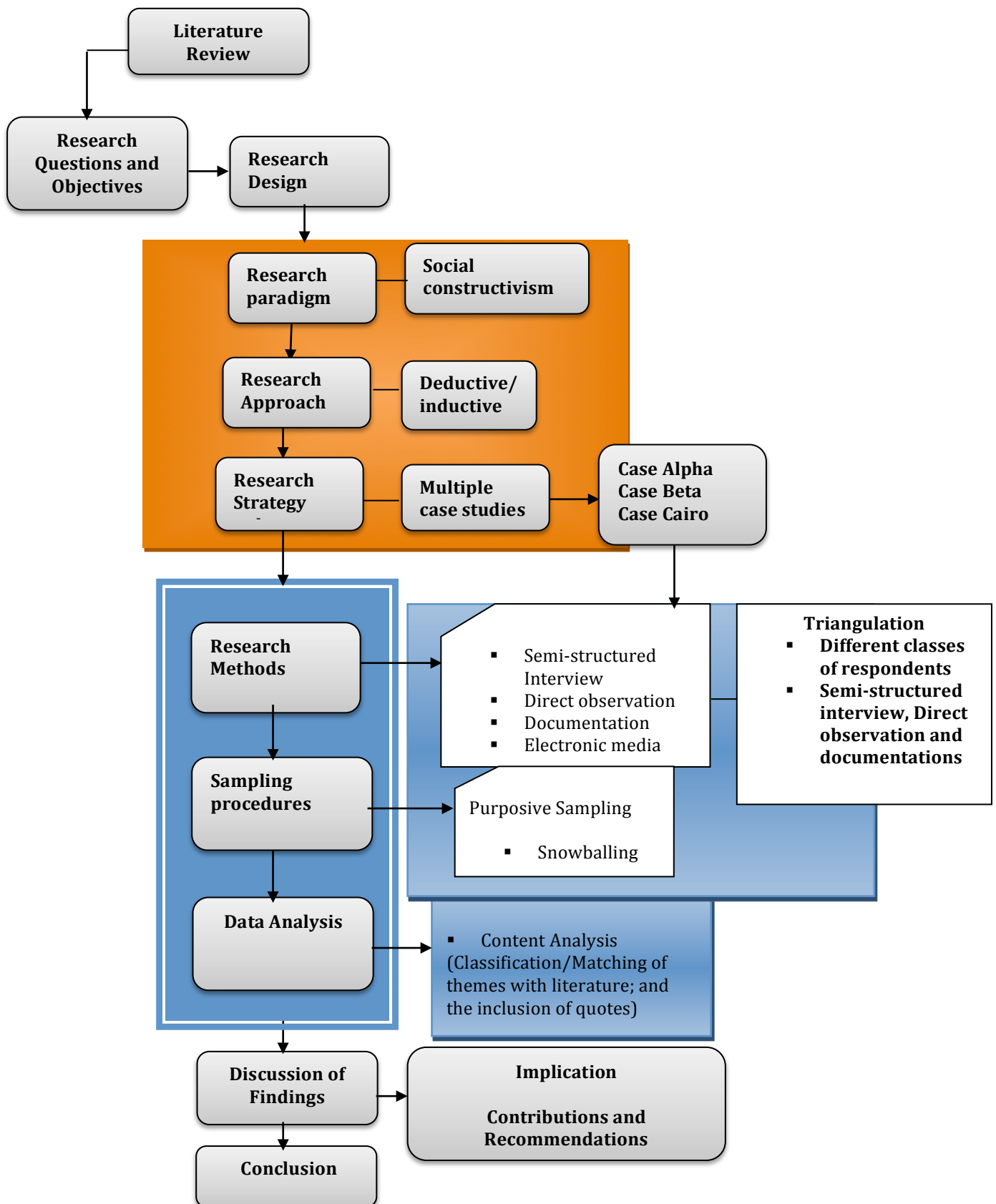
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter reviewed the literature to help establish the research questions, which became evident that they are a number of research gaps that needs investigation. This chapter therefore describes the processes used to gather relevant data from different sources and how it was analysed to answer the research questions/ achieve the objective of this study. This chapter examines and justifies the choice of the research design used in the study.

The chapter begins with an analysis of the key research paradigms and the application and justification for the use of social constructivism as the appropriate paradigm for this study. Secondly, the research approach of the study is presented with reasons for adoption. Both deductive and inductive approaches have been applied as the study engaged with knowledge from the literature, which formed the basis for investigation before proceeding to the field to gather relevant data to either support existing theory or develop new theory. This is followed by a discussion of the research strategy employed in the study; which is the case study strategy using multiple cases for robust data and comparison. Next, the different methods used in collecting data relevant for answering research questions are discussed. The semi-structured interview has been used as the main method and complemented by other primary methods (observation, documentations, and electronic media) and the literature. Furthermore, the directed content analysis as the method for data analysis is discussed drawing on the strengths and use in the context of this study, which led to how research trustworthiness was achieved in the study. This chapter concludes with the ethics procedure of the research and the personal experience of the researcher during fieldwork.

Figure 4.1 Methodology towards the study of OL in selected Universities in Nigeria



4.1 RESEARCH PARADIGM

In the field of organisational learning, many studies have been conducted using different methodologies such as ethnography (Orr, 1995), survey (Chiva et al 2007; Kim 2003), case study (DiBella et al 1996; Mitki & Herstein 2011), action research (Gorelick & April 2001) and participant observation (Barlowet et al 1998; Takian et al 2014). These differences demonstrate varying approaches and perspectives of researchers in OL and the fact that their theoretical traditions and individual backgrounds reflect their selected methodology. This study therefore investigates how selected universities in Nigeria facilitate OL; and what and how environmental and organisational elements shape OL in these universities by utilising Huber's information processing theory. According to the theory, learning in an organisation is a process that cuts across the relationship between individual, group and organisational levels. For this process to be understood, the researcher needs to be part of the study to understand the organisational learning experiences of selected universities through the use of tools such as interviews, observation and review documents to gather relevant data as it relates to OL.

The term research paradigm relates to the progress of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge (Saunders et al 2012:130), in essence, the way people view the world. Similarly explained, Patton (2002) presents that research paradigm involves examining the nature of knowledge, how it exists and how it is communicated through language. While, Collis and Hussey (2009:55) defined research paradigm as "the progress of scientific practice based on people's philosophies and assumptions about the world and the nature of knowledge; in this context, about how research should be conducted". Thus, reflecting the differences in understanding by researchers. Research paradigm according to Easterby-Smith et al (2008) enables the researcher clarify, identify and adopt feasible research design. Similarly, Proctor (1998:73) argues "*a clear understanding of the philosophical basis of the research helps to clarify research design; enables recognition of whether the strategy will or will not work; helps to identify and create designs beyond past experience; helps to ensure consistency in the application of different methods to a research question; and provides grounding for research methods within an accepted epistemological paradigm.*" Saunders et al (2012), Collis and Hussey

(2009), Easterby-Smith et al (2008: 56-73) and Crossan (2003) identified four main research paradigms; positivism, social constructivism, critical theory and realism. Besides these paradigms, other scholars identified other research paradigms. For instance, Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009) and Maxwell (2010) identify critical realism as another paradigm, Stern (2004) states constructivism and scientific realism as other paradigms in research, while Gephart (1999) presents critical postmodernism as another paradigm in research. The four main paradigms are presented below:

Table 4.1 Contrasting characteristics of four main paradigms

	POSITIVISM	CRITICAL THEORY	REALISM	SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM
ONTOLOGY	Naïve realism Reality is real and apprehensible	Historical realism “Virtual” reality is shaped by social, economic ethnic, political, cultural and gender values crystallised over time.	Critical realism Reality is real but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehensible and so triangulation from many sources is required to try to know it.	Critical relativism Multiple local and specific constructed realities.
EPISTEMOLOGY	Objectivist Findings true	Subjectivist Value mediated findings	Modified Objectivist Findings probably true	Subjectivist Constructed findings
METHODOLOGY	Experiments/surveys: Verification of hypothesis; chiefly quantitative methods	Dialogic/dialectical: Researcher is a transformative intellectual who changes the social world within which participants live	Case studies/convergent interviewing: Triangulation, interpretation of research issues by qualitative and quantitative methods such as structural equation modelling.	Hermeneutical/dialectical: Researcher is a passionate participant within the world being investigated.

Note: **Ontology** is 'reality', **Epistemology** is the relationship between that reality and the researcher and **Methodology** is the technique used by the researcher to discover that reality.

Source: Perry et al (1996:547)

Positivism as a paradigm is based on the ontological view that a single reality exists, and it is capable of being analysed and uninfluenced by research as argued by Schlegel (2015:99) that *"the notion that there is an externally existing world and things exist independently of people's beliefs and perceptions about them"*. Similarly, Easterby-Smith *et al* (2008:331) adopt this view of positivism, describing it as predicated on the notion that *"the social world exists externally, and that its properties can be measured through objective methods"*. This belief is rooted in sciences and mathematical studies where the truth about an absolute reality seems to appear without dispute. This is because positivism embraces traditional scientific approaches to developing knowledge through the use of research methods that aid in producing law-like generalizations just like those of sciences (Milliken, 2001). Along the same line of thought, Crossan (2003:49) contributes that *"Positivist approaches to the social sciences . . . assume things can be studied as hard facts and the relationship between these facts can be established as scientific laws"*. Schlegel (2015) stresses that in research; the main aim of the positivist tradition is to uncover laws about how the world functions and work and present generalizable statements about causal relationships, similar to the idea of *"quantitative research"* presented by Bavelas (1995). To this end, Demetrius (2012: 71) presents the basis for testing proposition under the positivist paradigm by arguing *"the truth of empirical proposition is determined by their agreement with reality"*. In essence, the truth is obtained by testing to prove it confirms or disconfirms with reality. Positivists also believe that the status of truth and knowledge is only considered significant if it has been generated through objective techniques or social objects are studied in the same way as natural science studies are carried out. And this research paradigm expects research to be conducted in a value-free manner. This involves the researcher behaving in a neutral and passive role without influencing the research process either culturally, socially, or based on the researcher's beliefs or experiences (Thomas, 2010). To this end, the researcher is expected to be detached from subjects under study. However, a major criticism of this philosophy is the fact that it does not provide the avenue for

examining human behaviour in an in-depth-manner, rather useful data provided is limited (Clark, 1998; Crossan, 2003).

However, the belief in single reality does not fit properly with the subjective nature of management theory and practice, although some researchers still adopt the idea (Gilley et al 2001; Kim 2003). Post-positivists continue to argue against the existence of absolute reality, believing that even if such reality exists, the complex nature of the world and human differences and imperfections makes the comprehension of such reality impossible. As Hawking (2001: 69) questions, “how could our finite minds comprehend an infinite universe? Isn’t it presumptuous of us even to make the attempt? Similarly, Kuhn (1962) argues that building management research on a single truth or reality is problematic. Additionally, Crossan (2003:51) posits that the nature of human makes *“the establishment of laws and the ability to generalise impossible”*. While, Russell (2002) opposed the view that scientific theories implied an absolute reality, rather he considered them as yielding partial but referential knowledge of the world. There are several differences in the function of theory under different paradigms- positivism, critical theory, realism and social constructivism. Under the positivist paradigm, theory is proven or verified, while the other three paradigms aim to either generate new or develop existing theory by showing how the theory exist in cases investigated (Thomas, 2003). Similar to the aim of this study, which is to develop theory by extending existing knowledge to a different context. Since the positivist paradigm is into theory testing, it is considered inappropriate for this study as it investigates OL in universities in Nigeria- a context with limited studies- with the aim of contributing to theory.

Saunders et al (2012) argue that critical theory; realism and social constructivism are appropriate for different types of research. **Critical theory** is seen as relevant for studies interested in critiquing and changing organisational or social values for example political, social, economic values. Studies adopting this paradigm are usually long-term and their assumptions are subjective leading to knowledge being value-dependent (Perry et al 1999). This study is not aimed at changing universities learning values but to understand their behaviour, that is how they learn as organisations, therefore the critical theory paradigm is inappropriate for current study.

Realism on the other hand, believes that an absolute reality exists, but several perceptions of the reality has to be triangulated in order to be understood (Perry et al 1999). While positivists prove or disprove hypothesis and relationships by testing theory, realists propose relationships on the basis of observations. In essence, realism is considered the appropriate paradigm when the research involves understanding the common reality of a system or organisation in which people operate independently (Maxwell, 2010). Looking at this, realism is rarely appropriate for this study as the study investigates OL in universities with regards how it does occur as oppose how it should occur.

While critical theory and realism consider a number of realities, **social constructivism** views reality as subjective, that is no one reality exists, rather people construct reality based on their experiences. Cohen *et al* (2007:22) explain social constructivism “*as a theoretical point of view that advocates the study of direct experience taken at face value; and one which sees behaviour as determined by the phenomena of experience rather than by external, objective, and physically described reality*”. To Easterby-Smith *et al* (2008), social constructivism concentrates on how individuals make sense of the world through their ability to share their experiences with others through the medium of language; that is, people construct their world and give meaning to their realities. This emphasizes how people, individually and collectively feel, think, can explain, and understand what is unique and particular to them as opposed to what is general and universal. This paradigm is argued as suitable for studies where people’s perceptions, experiences and behaviours form the most important reality; and where the studies are interested in unveiling interpretations and values behind people’s experiences and behaviours. Social constructivism is also appropriate when the study is highly dependent on the interaction between the researcher and case participants. This study falls in line with Maxwell’ (2010) view that in social constructivism, reality lies in the experience of the participant because multiple realities associated with different groups, events, and perspectives exist –not just an objective truth—and others rarely understand this. Therefore, establishing a direct contact is required to try to know and understand people’s experiences and the common methodologies for these are mainly qualitative methods such as case studies and interviews. In essence, social constructivism is

appropriate when seeking to understand reality from the experience of people involved in the event.

This research has been social in nature, dealing with the interaction, beliefs, realities and experiences of people as it regards organisational learning in selected universities in Nigeria; in particular, the way in which organisational learning is facilitated and shaped by elements within and around selected universities. This study adopted social constructivism as social constructivism is appropriate in studies that deal with how people individually or collectively experience, feel and are able to explain what is particular to them, not what is universally held (Maxwell, 2010). Organisational learning in these universities can only be related and explained by organisational members involved in the process. In understanding the experiences of organisational members as it relates to organisational learning, it is relevant for the researcher to be part of the study in order to establish the interaction and relationship between participants, the environment and the researcher as argued by Amaratunga et al (2002) Easterby-Smith et al (2008) and Patton (2002) that in social constructivism researchers cannot be detached from studies conducted.

Several studies describe and classify research methods based on the paradigms. Quantitative research is generally associated with the positivist paradigm, while qualitative research is commonly aligned to social constructivism or social construction, although some quantitative studies adopt social constructivism and vice versa (Crossan, 2003). Bavelas (1995) characterises quantitative research as objective in nature and qualitative as subjective. A quantitative researcher is usually driven by the identification of a problem from the literature, in which a substantial body of literature is available, to identify variables and existing theories that may need testing (Creswell, 2012). Gabriel (2013) in his argument stressed that quantitative methods focus on relationships between or among variables. This makes quantitative researchers abstract themselves from the world and the research process because they are less concerned about the rich descriptions of events. While to Bryman and Bell (2007), researchers using quantitative methods emphasise control and measurement carefully by assigning numbers to measurements. In essence, quantitative research is largely interested in the aggregation of data, mostly numeric values.

4.1.1 Research within the qualitative domain

Qualitative research goes beyond the methods used for data collection; rather its appropriateness depends on the nature of events to be studied. It is considered relevant in social-related research as it presents people's realities within their settings/context. To this end, Mason (1996: 4) broadly conceptualised qualitative research as *“grounded in a philosophical position which is broadly ‘interpretivist’ in the sense that it is concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced or produced ... based on methods of data generation which are flexible and sensitive to the social context in which data are produced (rather than rigidly standardized or structured, or removed from ‘real life’ or ‘natural’ social context, as in some forms of experimental method) ... based on methods of analysis and explanation building which involve understandings of complexity, detail and context. Qualitative research aims to produce rounded understandings on the basis of rich, contextual and detailed data. There is more emphasis on ‘holistic’ forms of analysis and explanation in this sense, than on charting surface patterns, trends and correlations. Qualitative research usually does use some form of quantification, but statistical forms of analysis are not seen as central.* Qualitative research is therefore concerned with studying people in their natural setting, thereby moving researchers to understand and accept people's realities and not to impose or stable meanings to events or occurrences. As argued by Apostolou (2014: 87) that *“we are agents through which knowledge is perceived and experienced, it is questionable whether we can achieve any form of knowledge that is independent of our own subjective construction. This goes for both participants and researchers involved in the study of human experiences”*. This implies that qualitative research seeks to create meaning and not necessarily concerned with the “truth” and its discovery. Bell and Bryman (2007) stressed that qualitative perspective is more concerned with seeking insight of occurrence rather than statistical analysis. Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) argue that qualitative research implies process and meanings. These processes and meanings are not quantified in measure in terms of quantity and frequency but in attaining deeper insight and understanding of phenomena, similar to the notion of social constructivism. In understanding “meaning” researchers seek diversity and relativistic experiences, while in seeking the “truth” singularity and monopoly is achieved (Apostolou, 2014).

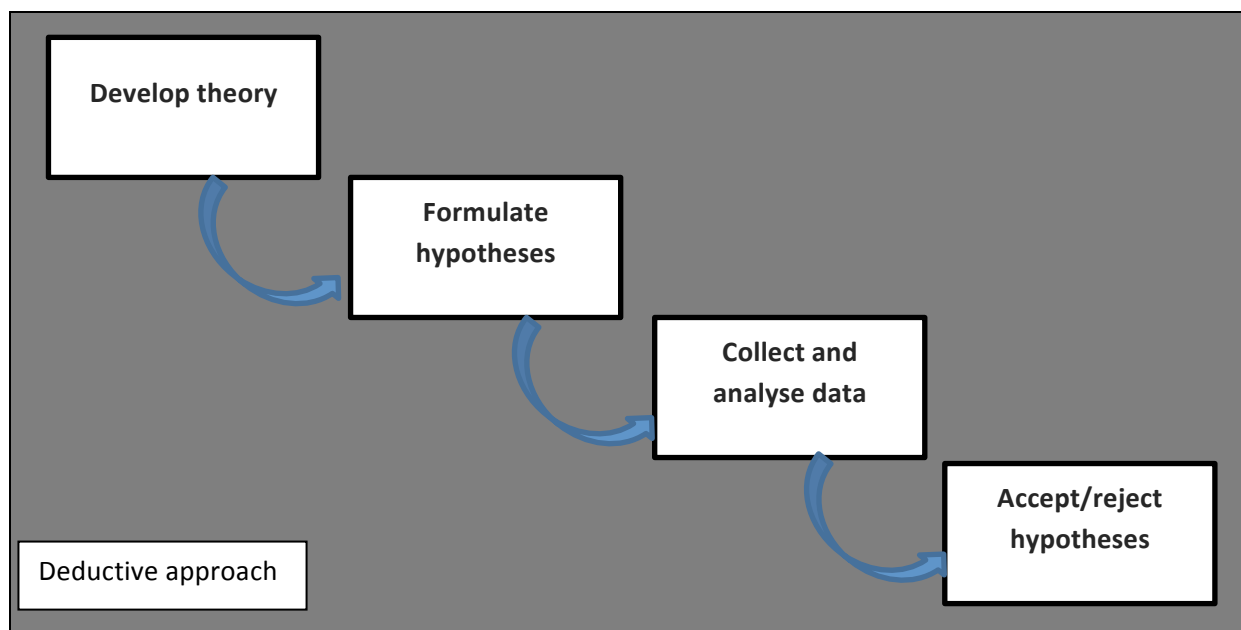
The central point of qualitative research is not to prove the existence of relationships or events, but to describe how these relationships and events occur. As the researcher is the main instrument of data collection, that observes the relationships and interdependencies by being in the field and part of the study (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). In the course of this study, qualitative research oriented the researcher towards analyzing learning in universities in their own context by paying attention to organisational members' expressions and activities both in the formal and informal settings of the university (Flick, 2002). This has enabled the researcher explain universities OL experiences as observed and how the process occurs by focusing on the learning activities of universities, the experiences presented by organisational members, and the meaning they construct to their actions and those of others. Considering the above features of qualitative research, it is appropriate for the current study as:

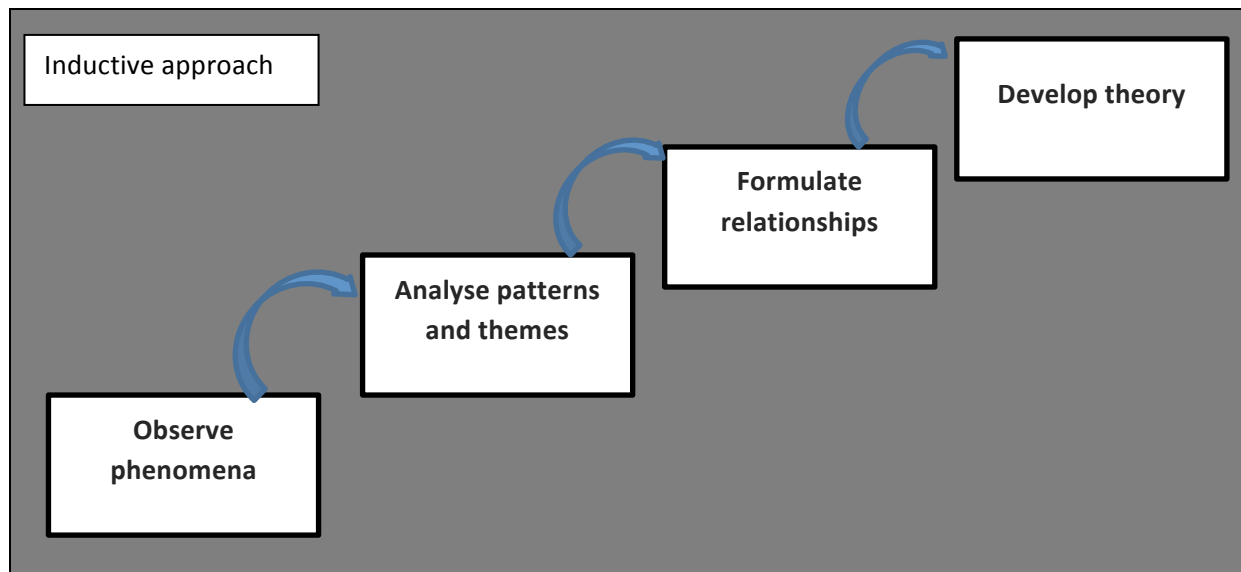
- It seeks to investigate the meaning and experience people attach to learning in their universities in order to explain how OLMs facilitate organisational learning; what and how environmental and organisational elements shape OL in these contexts in attempt to make inferences and draw conclusion based on findings as argued by Bell and Bryman (2007), Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Denzin and Lincoln (2000).
- It offers the researcher the opportunity to explore OL in the natural setting of universities by establishing contact and developing working relationships with participant in order to gather relevant data as they relate to OL in selected universities.
- The researcher forms part of the study as the instrument by which data are gathered and people's interpretation of OLMs and elements shaping OL is obtained. Besides participants' interpretations, the researcher also observed universities activities with regards learning both formally and informally. Although certain elements relating to learning in universities could not be observed rather they were re-confirmed by questioning other classes of participants and this reflects one benefit of qualitative research in this study. Additionally, the story of the researcher has been presented as being part of the whole research process.

4.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

The major reason for one's selection of a research approach is to decide the most incisive way of understanding the subject matter under study. This approach can be either deductive or inductive. A deductive approach is concerned with theory testing. An inductive approach involves the generation of new theory. Deductive approach often begins with a hypothesis (the emphasis is generally on causality), while inductive approach basically uses research questions to narrow the scope of the study with the aim of exploring new events or looking at previously researched areas from a different perspective (Gabriel, 2013). Thomas (2003) explains the inductive approach as a systematic method for analysing qualitative data, which is guided by precise objectives.

Figure 4.2 Deductive and Inductive Approach of Research





Source: Cavana *et al* (2001:36)

Deductive approach is generally associated with quantitative research, while inductive approach with qualitative, but there are no set rules as some qualitative research adopt a deductive orientation. Cepeda and Martin (2005) supporting this argument, point out that researchers often begin the process with some kind of conceptual/theoretical framework and it becomes impracticable for them to get to the field without an idea of relevant concepts in the area of study. Similarly, Saunders *et al* (2009) agree that using a combination of the two approaches within a study is possible, arguing that indeed it is advantageous to do so. One limitation of engaging in purely inductive research with no prior theory can be traced to the risk of inhibition (researcher might not benefit from available theory). While, approaching the research deductively might prevent the researcher from developing new theory (Perry, 1998). The key emphases of the two approaches are presented below:

Table 4.2 Major emphases of deductive and inductive approaches to research

Deductive emphases	Inductive emphases
Scientific principles	Gaining an understanding of the meanings attach to events
Moving from theory to data	Moving from data to theory
The need to explain casual relationships between variables	A close understanding of the research context
The application of controls to ensure validity of data	
The operationalization of concepts to ensure clarity of definition	The collection of qualitative data

A highly structured approach	A more flexible structure to permit changes of research emphasis as the research progresses
Researcher's independence of what is being researched	A realization that the researcher is part of the research process
The necessity to select samples of sufficient size in order to generalise conclusions	Less concern with the need to generalise

Source: Saunders *et al* (2009:127)

Selecting an appropriate research approach is critical to the success of any study, and it is evident that the two approaches-deductive and inductive- are considered relevant in empirical studies; both research approaches have been utilised in this study. Precisely, deductive approach has been employed in identifying workable themes on OLMs and elements shaping organisational learning from literature. While, the inductive approach has been utilised during fieldwork in order to achieve research objectives. Additionally, after analysis, patterns from data have been compared with the literature for comparison and identification of emerging patterns. In essence, there has been a movement in the use of these approaches at different phases of this study. For instance, from deduction to induction, then to deduction.

4.3 RESEARCH STRATEGY

Research strategy according to Saunders et al (2009: 600) is *"the general plan of how the researcher will go about answering the research questions"*. On a similar note, Bryman and Bell (2007) explain research strategy as the general orientation of conducting a research. Saunders *et al* (2009:141) assert that having a research strategy helps the researcher in addressing the research questions in order to achieve the study's objectives. They add that *"the choice of research strategy will be guided by the research questions and objectives, the extent of existing knowledge, the amount of time and other resources available, as well as the researcher's philosophical underpinnings"*. While for Yin (2009:5), choosing an appropriate research strategy entails considering three conditions:

- a) The type of research question posed
- b) The extent of control the researcher has over actual behavioural phenomenon and
- c) The degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events.

These conditions are tabulated based on different research designs.

Table 4.3: Characteristics of different research strategies

Strategy	For of research question	Required control over behavioural events	Focuses on contemporary events
Experiment	How, why	Yes	Yes
Survey	Who, what, where, how many, how much	No	Yes
Archival analysis	Who, what, where, how many, how much	No	Yes/No
History	How, why	No	No
Case study	How, why	No	Yes

Source: Yin (2009:8)

Based on the above conditions, researchers may choose the research strategy appropriate for their studies from a number of strategies. Acknowledging this point, Yin (2009) stressed that although various research strategies exist, they tend to overlap. Researchers should therefore select the most advantageous strategy for a particular study. These research strategies according to Collis and Hussey (2009), Saunders et al (2009) and Yin (2009) include survey, case study, grounded theory, experiment, action research, ethnography, archival research. This study seeks to adopt the case study research strategy as the appropriate strategy. The case study is briefly described below with justification for the preference.

Case Study Strategy

Case study is one way of doing research, especially when it is social in nature. This is because the research aims to understand people in a social context by interpreting their actions as group, community or an event (Thomas, 2010:309). This strategy deals with the investigation of phenomena to answer research questions by seeking evidences from the case setting. Yin (2009:17) defines the case study strategy “*as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident*”. In essence, case study is considered suitable when, phenomenon under investigation and the context are non-distinguishable. It is a strategy used in understanding the dynamics present within a setting. Some of the strengths of case

study strategy according to Wedawetta et al (2011a) are; firstly, case study is capable of accommodating different research techniques and methods; thus allowing the researcher gain a rich mix of data for the research. Secondly, it is a strategy suitable for obtaining in-depth knowledge of events or phenomena. Along the same line, Saunders et al (2009) present that the case study strategy is considered suitable if the researcher desires to gain rich understanding of the research context and the processes being enacted. In this research, the case study strategy has been chosen to gain in-depth information necessary to identify and understand OLMs facilitating organisational learning and elements shaping organisational learning in selected universities in Nigeria.

Yin (2009) further indicates that the case study strategy is fit to be employed when the study involves the “how” and “why” questions as it helps the research determine how the phenomenon occurs and why it does occur in that manner in the organisation. This strategy could also take account of the “what” question in establishing what the phenomenon is before knowing the “how” and “why”. Additionally, he recommends this strategy when the study concentrates on contemporary matters or events, and the researcher exercises no control over the event. This research looks at contemporary events, as it intends to answer questions pertaining organisational learning in selected universities in Nigeria, how organisational learning is facilitated, what and how environmental and organisational elements shape organisational learning in these universities; and the researcher has no control over the learning in these universities.

According to Yin (2009) and Eisenhardt (1989), case studies can involve single or multiple cases, arguing that there are certain misunderstanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the case study strategy, which poses the need to develop a different perspective. For instance, Voss et al (2002) argue that single case study provides greater in-depth understanding of the case, but it tends to be limited in the generalization of conclusion drawn, and it also leads to bias. However, one way of minimising these limitations is to use multiple case studies (Wedawetta et al, 2011a). The use of multiple case studies can provide a rich picture of life and behaviour within a context (Easterby-Smith et al 2008:97). According to Collis and Hussey (2003) and Easterby-Smith *et al* (2008) single and multiple case studies have been used in various research investigations. Baxter and Jack (2008) distinguished between a single case and

multiple case studies. A single case study enables the researcher explore units or events within a case with no room for comparison, while the use of multiple cases promote the examination of several cases to better understand the existing similarities and differences between cases. Moreover, evidences and results obtained from the use of multiple cases could be argued to be robust and reliable because of the ability to compare, that which is not obtainable in single case. Yin (2009) also notes that multiple case studies may be preferable than single case study because when multiple cases are used they predict similar or contrasting results based on their selection. However, Perry (1998) argues that there are no guides in selecting the number of cases for study; rather Voss et al (2002) opined that smaller numbers of cases offer better opportunities for in-depth investigation than large numbers. Based on this discussion, three case universities have been selected to enable the researcher gain robust evidences, conduct in-depth investigation and for comparison purposes. Additionally, the researcher selected three universities based on the classification of universities in Nigeria; and they are sufficient to fulfil the aim and objectives of the study.

Justification for the choice of case study organisation

The choice of case studies is an important decision for researchers and as such must be considered. There are a number of reasons why universities in Nigeria are chosen as suitable cases for this research. Firstly, Universities are increasingly becoming more relevant to societies than ever before. Most Universities are known to create positive impacts that make them engines of social and economic growth through their roles in education, business research, the development of legal instruments that provide better incentives to innovation and finally, the forming of minds able to participate in the creation and discovery of knowledge in all aspects of the society (Meyer, 2002:539).

Secondly, majority of research on organisational learning in developed and developing nations are centred on private and for-profit organisations with little reference to service organisations like educational institutions. Substantiating this claim, (Patnaik et al 2013: 159) identify that research on learning in universities is scanty compared to those of business and industrial organisations. If organisational learning is to flourish in universities, it is critical that the concepts, the mechanisms that sort to encourage learning be better understood.

Thirdly, accessibility is relevant in a researcher's choice of case studies, because accessibility enables the research gain the data required for the research (Silverman, 2002). For this purpose, universities have been selected as case studies as they are easily accessible than most private organisations in Nigeria. This access was achieved by the researcher meeting and discussing with either the chancellor or registrars of the universities about the research, some of which directed that the researcher be introduced to interviewees and make them relaxed to attend to the researcher's questions.

Justification of Case Selection

Denscombe (2010:57-58) suggests four instances for case selection and justification for suitability. These are typical instance, extreme instance, test-site for theory and least likely instance.

Typical instance: *on this basis, selected case is similar in crucial respects with the others that might have been chosen, and that the findings from the case study are therefore likely to apply elsewhere.*

Extreme instance: *A case might be selected because it provides something of a contrast with the norm. This could be selecting either smaller or larger than usual cases.*

Test-site for theory: *The logic for the selection of a case can be based on the relevance of the case study for previous theory.*

Least likely instance: *Following the idea of test-sites for theory, a case might be selected to test the validity of 'theory' by seeing if it occurs in an instance where it might be least expected.*

In this study, case organisations have been selected based on their similarities and differences. In terms of similarities or the typical instance, these organisations are all universities, set up for a similar purpose- education-, and operate similar structures. On the other hand, case universities have been selected due to their differences in classification and governance- that is federal, state and private universities (see chapter two). This is in line with Denscombe (2010) argument in the extreme instance that cases could be chosen because of their contrast. The case classification is summarized below:

- Case Alpha is classified as a Federal public university established within twenty years of independence and termed “First Generation University” and is governed by the Federal Government.
- Case Beta is classified as a State public university established between twenty first to forty years of independence and termed “third generation university” and is governed by both the Federal and State Government.
- Case Cairo is classified as a private university established between the forty first to fifties of independence (present) and termed “fifth generation university” and is governed by a proprietor.

Selecting these universities has helped the researcher in gaining a broader perspective on organisational learning in the above universities. It has also permitted the researcher make comparisons with regards to age, school composition, structures and control.

Issues related to case study strategy

Yin (2009) argues that the case study strategy as a research strategy is often considered as offering insufficient objectivity and providing little basis for rigour. In minimising these weaknesses, this study worked with a frame of reference developed from the literature in investigating OLMs and elements shaping OL in selected universities. Additionally, the researcher triangulated her data and method as a means of overcoming the above issue. In achieving this, different methods for data collection- interview, observation, document review- were utilised in the study as one form of triangulation. Secondly, through the four classes of respondents (key players, academic staff, administrative staff and student representative) established from pilot study, data was triangulated, similar to the argument of Crowe et al (2011) that triangulation addresses the limitation of the case study strategy.

Crowe et al (2011) further drew attention to the challenge of case study strategy, that the strategy involves the collection of large volume of data in understanding an event or a case. In most instances, the data collected tends to be irrelevant or of little value to the case. In managing this challenge, data was collected for this study in line with research questions/objectives, while the researcher still remained flexible allowing different paths to be explored but she ensured her focus was on the research objectives. With

regards the issues of case study strategy, Flyvbjerg (2006) argues that with case study, generalisation is impossible and social science research is all about generalisation. However, Bell and Bryman (2007) counter this view by presenting that generalisation may be enhanced when multiple cases are studied. In as much as this study utilised multiple-case studies (three universities) in its investigation, generalisation does not constitute an objective of this study, rather the uniqueness of learning in case universities has been presented.

4.4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Research methods are ways of gaining evidence. They are set of tools that can be used in collecting research data. If the study employs quantitative methodology, it will be an attempt to measure variables or count events; whereas, if a qualitative methodology is used, the emphasis will be on meaning, experiences, and interpretations relating to the event (Collis and Hussey, 2009). Considering that this research seeks to uncover the meaning, experiences and interpretation of people as it relates to organisational learning in selected universities in Nigeria, qualitative methodology has been employed as appropriate. To this end, data have been derived from several sources such as literature review and synthesis as the secondary source, semi structured interview-as the main primary source-complemented with the examination of data from observation, organisational documents and archives.

Yin (2009:102) proposes six major sources of evidence to be used in case studies. The strengths and weaknesses of the major sources of evidence are summarized in the table below:

Table 4.4: Strengths and weaknesses of six sources of evidence

Sources of evidence	Strengths	Weakness
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable: Can be reviewed repeatedly • Unobtrusive: not created as a result of the case study • Exact: contains exact names, references, and details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retrievability can be low • Biased selectivity, if collection is incomplete • Reporting bias: reflects bias of the author • Access: may be deliberately blocked
Archival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as above

records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Precise and quantitative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility may be limited for private reasons
Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted: focuses directly on case studies • Insightful: provides perceived causal inferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bias due to poorly constructed questions • Response bias • Inaccuracies: Interviewees say what they think interviewer wants to hear
Direct observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reality: covers events in real time • Contextual: covers context of events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time consuming • Selectivity: poor, unless broad coverage • Reflexivity: events may be processed differently
Participant/direct observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as for direct observation • Insightful into interpersonal behaviour and motives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as for direct observation • Bias due to investigator's manipulation of events
Physical artefacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insightful into cultural features • Insightful into technical operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selectivity • Availability

Source: Yin (2009:102)

The above identified sources of evidence can be used independently or collectively, depending on the nature and requirement of one's research. The nature of a research and the ability to gather data that would produce reasonable results determines the method or methods to be selected (De Vaus, 2001). Barnes et al (2001) recommend that researchers should work with methods that best assist in addressing research questions and realising their aim, providing credibility within the context of their research. Yin (2009) however argues that no single method of data source offers complete advantage over others, rather the use of multiple sources aid in clarifying the meaning of phenomena investigated. Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) advice researchers to use multiple methods for data collection in order to enhance corroboration of evidence and findings and also to improve validity. According to Collis and Hussey (2009), the use of multiple data collection methods aid researchers overcome the issue of bias associated with the use of single method. Accordingly, this study utilizes several

research techniques, aiming to benefit from the advantage of each method as well as to gain in-depth understanding of the subject matter.

4.4.1 Literature Review and Synthesis

Literature review and synthesis was used as a research technique in this study, and secondary data was collected and evaluated where it was considered appropriate. During the early stage of the study, the researcher searched and reviewed the literature related to organisational learning. As the research progressed, the literature search and review was narrowed down to the process of organisational learning. Further, into the review, the researcher focused on mechanisms facilitating organisational learning and elements shaping organisational learning. The literature review and synthesis provided the background to the subject matter being investigated and aided in establishing the research gaps presented in Chapters One and Three. Additionally, the literature review was used as the basis to identify workable themes on OLMs and elements shaping organisational learning to build better insight into the area being investigated.

4.4.2 Interviews

According to Amaratunga et al (2002:18), an interview is a method *“whose purpose is to collate descriptions of the life-world of the interviewees following an interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena”*. Using interview as a method involves collecting data from interviewees on what they do, think or feel towards a topic or an event (Collis and Hussey, 2009). Interview provides rich data on subject matter of study, it is widely accepted in social sciences as a form of inquiry due to its ability to explore and gain in-depth information and findings (Sandelowski, 2000). Aside the supplies of rich data, interviews also help obtain first hand data, uncover new clues, and reveal new dimensions of a problem and to secure accurate accounts directly from cases of study (Shaw, 1999). Stressing further, Yin (2009) argued that interview amongst others is a major method of sourcing information in case study research. The primary aim of the interview is that it permits the researcher to access people’s stories and reasons, establishing a contact with participants (Seidman, 2013).

Interview is classified as structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Structured interviews are termed interviewer-administered questionnaire because it questions

participants based on identical set of questions. A semi-structured interview covers a list of themes and questions, which may vary from interview to interview; this may result in omitting certain questions depending on the context. Semi-structured interviews can be achieved through face-to-face contact, telephone or email. While unstructured interviews are informal and often employed when exploring deeply in general areas of interest (Saunders et al 2009).

Several advantages arise in using interviews as data collection methods. Interviews occur in natural settings allowing real, holistic descriptions related to real life; personal contact helps the researcher gain the explanation of interviewees' contribution when not understood; it also facilitates the use of visual aids in concept description (Miles and Huberman 1994; Robson 2002). Interviews are considered as alternative for lengthy questionnaires, but favourable at obtaining large amount of in-depth data with less time. The interview can be explained as an effective means of getting quality and in-depth data (Yin, 2009). Despite the benefits of using interviews, the conduction of an interview can be time consuming and it can be expensive as compared to other methods (Hair et al 2011). Interviewees concern for anonymity may affect their contribution and openness. The interviewer's skills, experience, motivation and bias are likely to affect the interview process as well (Robson, 2002).

Justification for the use of Semi-Structure Interview

The researcher adopts the semi-structured interview considering the advantages and the issues to be addressed. The face-to face semi-structured interview has helped in creating a close contact with the interviewees, and that presented the ground for probing questions and gathering meaning through expressions, to an extent the contact made participants more relaxed. Several trainings organized by Salford postgraduate and staff training research training (SPoRT) on how to carry out in-depth interviews were attended by the researcher; in some cases, practical sessions were held. This help to minimise one limitation of interview being that the quality of data collected depends on the skills of interviewer (Bowie and Buttle, 2013). Also, the researcher had themes and questions to work with during the interview which kept her focused in investigating the subject matter. These themes and questions have been drawn from the literature as described by Yin (2011:134) *"that the researcher will have a mental framework of study questions, but the specifically verbalised questions as posed to any*

given participant will differ according to context and setting of the interview". Similarly, after several interviews, the researcher altered some questions to accommodate arising themes from interviewees. This influenced the thought and experience of the researcher, and how the researcher questioned other participants as well.

The credibility of semi-structured interviews relies on the extent to which a researcher has obtained access to knowledge and meanings of informants. The flexible and responsive interaction between the interviewer and the participant allowing responses to be probed in order to understand issues from different angles, shows that the validity of the interview is high (Easterby-Smith et al 2008; Saunders et al 2009). Unlike the unstructured interview approach, a number of predetermined areas have to be explored. The semi-structured interview has been chosen as the main method for this research because it is flexible and permits the modification of questions by the researcher for better understanding of the topic investigated. Saunders et al (2009) asserts that semi-structured interviews are employed not only for the reason of understanding the **What** and **How** of events in qualitative research, but also to emphasize on explaining the **Why**. That is an aim of this research.

Choice of interviewees

Interviewees have been chosen from three case universities. After obtaining permission from universities authority, the researcher made contact seeking the composition of organisational members in general and referrals to those with understanding of the subject matter of the research. These are people knowledgeable about organisational learning and about how it occurs, since literature identifies that organisations learn from organisational members of different levels. Therefore, for this study, focus was initially on academic and non-academic staff because these are the major categorization of staff in the institutions, and secondly they are the appropriate sources of data regarding how learning occurs organisationally, a technique known as purposive sampling (Yin, 2011). But on conduction of few interviews recommendations were made to the interviewer like considering those staff labelled as key players who influence the process and the students who are part of the organisation and contribute to the process, and other offices that play huge roles in learning. This is similar to the thought of Patel (2003:278) that learning in organisation is an all-inclusive experience that involves staff and students' interaction. This has helped the researcher in gaining

relevant data by engaging with organisational members with profound knowledge about the subject matter both independently and through referral by other organisational members at all organisational levels; a technique described by Saunders et al (2009) as snowballing. Because of this, the researcher conducted another phase of interviews with the inclusion of clear classification of interviewees.

In this research, key players comprise of the Registrar, Academic Deans, Heads of Departments (HODs)/Line Managers (school of humanities), Deans of student's affairs and the ICT directors. While the participating academic staff are those mainly involved in course delivery and non-academic staff are those responsible for the daily management of the school system. Finally, the student's representatives are known as the student's union Government - popularly called SUG—are the intermediaries between students and the university management saddled with the duties of managing student's affairs at the lower level. Table 4.5 represents the composition of interviewees from the case studies.

Table 4.5: Composition of interviewees from case studies

Interviewees positions	Referred in the study
Deputy VCs, Registrars, Academic Deans, Heads of Departments, Deans of Student's affairs and directors of ICT, Librarian, Bursar.	Key Players (KP)
Senior Lecturers, Junior Lecturers, Assistant Lecturer and Graduate Assistant.	Academic Staff (AS)
Registry, administrative, directorate and ICT staff.	Non-Academic Staff (NAS)
Student Union Government	Student's Representative (SR)

Time and Location of the Interview

The researcher obtained ethical approval in June 2014. All interviews conducted have been carried out at the convenience of the respondents. The interviews occurred during July to November 2014. All interviews were conducted on campus but at different locations-some in offices, conference halls, Library and cool spots- selected by

interviewees. The numbers of interviewees in three case universities were 16 in Case Alpha, 13 in Case Beta and 9 in Case Cairo, and they represented organisational members from the top, middle and lower level of the universities. Covering these levels aided in enhancing the validity of responses, as it has been possible triangulating data obtained from participants of different levels. The researcher had to travel to different states in Nigeria because of universities locations. The researcher met the registrars and in some cases, the chancellor to obtain permission to conduct the research by presenting the ethical approval, information sheet and consent sheets detailing the aims and objectives of the research. Some permission had been obtained immediately while some had to be processed before getting back to the researcher.

The researcher approached independently employed and referred participants (all participants) before the interview and presented them with the letter of permission (in Case Cairo), ethical form and the information sheet detailing the purpose of the research, some participants also asked for the interview protocol which the researcher provided. The researcher used this medium to ask for participant's agreement to be included in the research sample. As participants employed or referred had the choice of accepting or rejecting to be part of the study, which in this case some refused to be part of the study based on different reasons. Meeting participants beforehand helped the researcher identify her samples, schedule interviews at participants' convenience, develop working relationship and trust with participants, which made the interview process more relaxed.

Before commencing interviews, the researcher gave all participants consent forms, information sheets and areas of coverage and these forms had to filled and returned to the researcher. All interviews have been conducted in English and participants allowed the researcher to record responses based on the condition their identities would be anonymised. This the interview did by coding the respondents and not using their names or position in referencing their responses. After every interview, participants were given the opportunity to make additional contributions as it relates to organisational learning and the researcher thanked them for their participation and contribution. While participants offered open doors to the researcher in return. This the researcher utilised after transcribing and reflecting on data in order to ensure participants responses and interpretation are appropriately presented. Interviews

conducted fluctuated between forty-five to ninety minutes. The researcher also had the opportunity of collecting data through other complementary sources.

Issues related to interview as a method

Allmark et al (2009) and Kvale (1996) suggest key questions and concerns researchers may bear in mind when using in-depth interview as a method of data collection. These questions were considered in this study and found useful in enhancing research credibility. Table 4.6 Summarises interview concerns and the measures used to address the concerns in this study:

Table 4.6 Interview concerns and measures

QUESTION/CONCERN	ADDRESSING MEASURES
How does the researcher begin the interview phase?	The researcher visited universities to seek permission by presenting her ethical approval, informed consent form and information sheet explaining the aim of the research and requesting organisational permission. Upon acceptance, the researcher was showed around and she used the opportunity to pilot study on three participants after obtaining consent from them. This help set the researcher in the action of interviewing, how to do it and things to consider.
How many subjects/ participants does the research need?	This was not identified at the beginning of the study; rather the researcher determined her subjects based on their availability, relevance to study, acceptance to participate and saturation point.
How can the researcher avoid leading questions?	Interview questions were developed from the literature and not based on self-judgement. Questions were however modified as interviews progressed to

	avoid ambiguity and to accommodate emerging themes.
How does the researcher know what the subjects/participants mean?	The researcher made use of probing questions as a means of reconfirming with participants in order to avoid misinterpretation.
Is a transcription of the interview necessary?	Transcription is required as proof of credibility of the study and as a reflection of participants' actual voice/words. It is also relevant to enable analysis.
How does the researcher report the interview findings?	After transcribing data from each case university, data have been presented and analysed as cross-case analysis. Analysis followed the frame of reference developed from literature by highlighting the similarities and differences in findings from case universities as seen in Chapters five and six. Findings emerging from case universities are then discussed and summarised.
Could the interview harm research subjects/participants?	The interview cannot harm participants as they were informed about the content of the study and questions and their permission was sort before the conduction of interviews. Furthermore, the researcher maintained participants' anonymity by not displaying their Bio-data and by using codes to represent them. All interviews were conducted according to the wishes of participants and recordings were done with their permission.
What if the researcher misses a question	Participants' kept open doors for the

or the answer to her question is not clear after leaving the universities site?	researcher to contact them in case of any clarification and assistance with regards the research. To this end, the researcher revisited few participants for re-confirmation after summarising the interview recordings, being that the researcher spent a minimum of one month in each case university.
How can the researcher manage potential power balance between her and the participants?	Before conducting the interviews, the researcher ensured she developed a working relationship with participants and this helped her build trust with participants, making them relax and more free in engaging with her. Some participants however felt free to participate because colleagues recommended them from other departments and that gave them a sense of security.

Source: Allmark et al (2009:4-14) and Kvale (1996:246-265).

OTHER COMPLEMENTARY DATA

4.4.3 Direct Observation

Direct observation as another method of data collection can be formal or less formal. It becomes formal by assessing the formal events, while less formal by observing other events, which took place during the interviews (Yin, 2009). This method was used in gathering more data to complement other methods in all case studies. In this research, the researcher watched and observed participants' expressions, people's behaviour and communication with others in the universities. For example, the researcher observed the passage of files from one office to another, the interaction between and amongst students and their lecturers, between colleagues and the command of authority during and outside the interview process. Additionally, the researcher noted that in Case Cairo, students had free access to any staff, with or without appointment as long as the staff is

free to attend to students. The university operates an open door policy. On the contrary, in Case Alpha, students with appointments were seen hanging outside lecturers' offices until asked into the office by the lecturer. While students with no appointment keep waiting and signalling in attempt to gain the lecturers' attention. This has been interpreted as the difference between public and private universities and the way they do things (culture). All direct observations are further analysed and discussed in chapters five and six. Summary of the researcher's observation activities are tabulated below:

Table 4.7 Observation activities

The researcher made known her intention to universities providing her obtained ethical documents and other information sheets.	Kawulich (2005)
Upon acceptance by universities, the researcher was introduced to few participants in Cases Alpha and Beta, while some participants volunteered to take the researcher round the universities. In Case Cairo a staff was assigned to accompany the researcher around and introduce her to other organisational members. This activity was useful in helping the researcher get acquainted with the universities setting, to consider what to observe and from whom to get information.	DeMunck and Sobo (1998)
The researcher started brief observation and notice of activities and interactions in the universities while getting familiar with the settings.	
In some cases, the researcher looked for key words from interviews and conversations to observe in the universities. In essence, interviews guided some observations, and interviews and observations were undertaken on the same day in some situations.	DeWalt and DeWalt (2002)
The researcher also visits the universities to observe at different times and days. At intervals, the researcher notes what has been observed, discussed or heard to enable her verify from participants. After such observations, participants were questioned on what was observed.	Wolcott (2001)
All notes are properly documented for analysis.	Kawulich (2005)

4.4.4 Documentation

Documentation as a source of evidence tends to be relevant in every case study research. It is a useful qualitative data collection technique (Yin, 2009). Documentation could range from those obtained in the case study to those prepared by the researcher. Documents presented to the researcher by the cases include, memos, training manuals, official publications, bulletins, workshop and conference slides and agendas. In some

cases, the documents were given for sighting, some downloaded and some were copied after interviews. The researcher also accessed other documents open to the public. Accessed documents used by the researcher were related to organisational learning helping the researcher gain more insight to better examine and understand organisational learning in the universities.

4.4.5 Archival Records

This method includes census and other historical data of the institutions. They include service records, maps and charts of the geographical features of a place and organisational records of the institution (Yin, 2009). In the context of this study, it includes accessing organograms, JAMB data and survey, records of institution's succession. For example, Case Alpha has a storehouse where all documents relating to different regimes are kept for twenty-five years before they are discarded. Consulting some of these records, help the researcher build an understanding of trends and events occurring over the years. The researcher used only information contributes in answering the research questions.

Table 4.8: Steps Taken by the researcher to overcome the Weaknesses of Data Collection Methods

Source of Evidence	Weaknesses	Efforts made by the researcher to overcome identified weaknesses
Interviews	<p>Bias due to poorly constructed questions</p> <p>Response bias</p> <p>Inaccuracies: Interviewees say what they think interviewer wants to hear</p> <p>Inaccuracies due to poor recall</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview questions were obtained from the literature review and centred on the research aims and objectives. The questions were discussed with the researcher's supervisor and approved by the ethical board and finally piloted with three participants in the first case study university. • By utilising several data collection methods, the participants' bias reduced to a large extent through cross-checking by the researcher. Triangulation of data collection was applied throughout the field work. • Participants' responses were often cross-checked, confirmed and verified either through other classes of respondents or other sources. For instance, the existence of SIWES was confirmed by asking key players,

		students and other staff. Also, the researcher ensured notes on key points were taken after interviews and during observation for further questioning and recollection.
Direct observation	<p>Time consuming</p> <p>Selectivity: poor, unless broad coverage</p> <p>Reflexivity: events may be processed differently</p> <p>Cost: hours needed by observer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher devoted five months for the data collection phase. Observation consumed a good portion of the time and it was worth undertaking such in the research. Observation helped the researcher understand the working environment of the universities and how organisational learning is facilitated and shaped as mentioned in the interviews and documents • Observation here mainly focused on their approach to learning through information processing, the mechanisms they operated to enable learning and other observable elements shaping their learning. • The researcher tried to mingle as part of the system by visiting both formal and informal settings of the universities to enable her observe their behaviours and activities as it concerns learning.
Documentation/Archival records	<p>Retrievability can be low</p> <p>Biased selectivity, if collection is incomplete</p> <p>Reporting bias: reflects bias of the author</p> <p>Access: may be deliberately blocked</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents were available at the library, storehouse, the universities websites and some were obtained departmentally for the researcher to access. • All universities have their standard procedures for documentations and classification for both electronic and manual documentations. • The researcher was granted access to certain documents but the highly confidential documents were restricted but were discussed by the respondents.

4.4.5 Electronic Data

Machill and Beiler (2009) identified the relevance of utilising emails, websites (internet) and intranet as sources of data collection, especially in research. The universities websites provided useful data as it relates to their learning; as it captures certain learning activities/ forums through which organisational members and external parties

could access to relate and learn. Although external parties have limited access compared to organisational members. In addition, the website serves as a knowledge repository. Emails are also used in facilitating learning in these universities but the use of this source tends to differ across the three universities.

Table 4.9 Summary of Sources of Complementary Data

Source	Universities
Direct Observation	Alpha, Beta & Cairo
Organisational Chart	Alpha, Beta & Cairo
University Web	Alpha, Beta & Cairo
Magazines and Newsletters	Alpha & Cairo
Evaluation Report	Alpha
Training Manuals/Documentations	Alpha, Beta & Cairo
Archival House/Library	Alpha, Beta & Cairo

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Yin (2009) argues that the aim of data analysis is to treat collated evidences fairly and produce analytical conclusions. Similarly, Flick (2007) stressed that the aim of qualitative analysis is to identify, compare and examine patterns and themes, in order to interpret these patterns/themes. Despite the aim, Saunders et al (2009) and Robson (2002) argue that there are no clear or accepted techniques or set rules regarding analysing qualitative data. For instance, Yin (2009) recommends four techniques for analysing qualitative data: pattern- matching, time series, program, logic and explanation building. While authors like Braun and Clarke (2006); Elo and Kyngas (2008), Hsieh and Shannon (2005) identify thematic and content analyses as appropriate techniques in analysing qualitative data. However, one major problem of qualitative data analysis according to Easterby-Smith et al (2008) is the difficulty encountered in data reduction to meaningful conclusions, from different sources. This study adopts content analysis in analysing data with justifications for the use of this technique.

Content analysis involves organizing communication content or text data in a manner that allows easy identification, indexing or retrieval of content relevant to research questions. This is done through the objective and systematic application of categorization rules (classifying words or phrases with the same meaning into different categories) into data that can be clearly summarised and compared (Graneheim and

Lundman, 2004:106). Similarly, Prasad (2008) defines content analysis as the subjective interpretation of text data through the systematic classification procedure and the identification of patterns. This content or text data might be in verbal, electronic or print form which could be obtained from narrative sources, interviews, observation, open-ended survey questions as well as from books and print materials (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). Using content analysis enables the researcher generate inferences from qualitative data, while still maintaining the richness of the data (Elo and Kyngas, 2008:108). Hsieh and Shannon (2005: 1279-84) identified three approaches to content analysis: conventional, directed and summative approach.

The *conventional approach* is generally appropriate when a study aims to describe a phenomenon and when research literature on the event is limited, so codes/themes are generated from the text data; similar to the inductive thematic approach of Braun and Clarke (2006). The *directed approach* aims to extend conceptually existing theory or framework. The use of theory as a guiding point in this approach helps focus the research questions and permits the researcher use themes from literature before developing new themes if the need be. In essence, this approach is appropriate for studies aiming to investigate events considered incomplete or events that would benefit from further description. In addition, this approach offers flexibility during data collection by creating the room for open-ended and probing question. Finally, the *summative approach* considers quantifying certain contents in the text data with the aim of understanding the contextual use of content. It is primarily appropriate when studies undertaken are not to infer meaning but to explore usage. For this study, the directed content approach has been utilised for the following reasons: the research extends existing OL theories and knowledge to selected Universities in Nigeria in attempt to gain in-depth understanding of learning in these universities. Additionally, the directed approach supports the use of targeted, open-ended and probing questions during data collection, offering the researcher more flexibility. The use of directed approach has helped the researcher in working initially with themes from the literature before developing new themes as the analysis progressed. However, the major limitation of this approach is that “*overemphasis on the theory can blind researchers to contextual aspects of the phenomenon*” (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005:1283). In managing this

limitation, the researcher analyses contextual contributions presented by respondents as it relates to research questions.

In analysing data using content analysis, the researcher followed a set of procedures: transcription, data reduction, data display, pattern matching, verification, drawing conclusion suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), Braun, and Clarke (2006).

- ✓ At the transcription phase the researcher tried to listen to digital recording conversation and transcribed after interviews conducted, jotting down main points at different periods. The researcher also converted scribbles from observation to some form of written record (Seidman, 2013). The jotted points and quotes were used to confirm interviewees' meanings and inferences; as well as those from observation, similar to one way of data verification explained by Miles and Huberman (1994). This phase enabled the researcher get familiar with the data as she had to listen over and over again to transcribe and also she had to read the data several times.
- ✓ The research ensured all collected materials from primary sources are being properly labelled and referenced. Transcribed data has been reduced by categorising interviewees responses according to questions and universities to identify responses required in answering research questions. Initially, the researcher made use of working themes from the literature as oppose developing new themes as explained by Hsieh and Shannon (2005) in the use of directed content analysis. Interviewee responses were further classified based on predetermined themes from the literature in each university, drawing similar themes together, enabling the researcher identify related themes. Similarly, data from observation and evidences from other sources have been categorised according to themes. While data without predetermined themes were categorised according to temporal themes developed from data under the universities. The researcher read obtained data in comparison to the classification for clarification and verification.
- ✓ The researcher further developed sub-themes from broad themes as these have been identified to be unique to case studies and therefore considered relevant to be sub-categorised. For instance, integrated OLMs as a broad theme from the literature was further sub-categorised into classroom meetings, training,

meetings as sub-themes or kinds of integrated OLMs (OLMs) identified in selected universities. This sub-categorisation has also been done to broad themes developed from data. Themes and their sub-categories have been displayed in tables in the appendix.

- ✓ Data from interviews, observation and other sources are then interpreted and presented (analysed) according to themes and sub-themes with the inclusion of quotes to back the claims. This interpretation and presentation has been done first by comparing and contrasting data on similar themes and sub-themes from Cases Alpha, Beta and Cairo, while sub-themes unique to any university has been presented differently. The researcher further used the literature to either support or distinguish findings arising from case universities; similar to the explanation of pattern matching by Klenke (2008) that it involves linking two patterns where one is theoretically based and the other operational and observed. Theoretical patterns arise from traditional theories, ideas. While the operational pattern stems from direct observation, interviews, field notes and other supporting documents. Internal validity of the study is therefore enhanced if patterns match.
- ✓ Afterwards, findings have been discussed as to how it is similar or different from what has been obtained in literature, from which conclusion has been drawn.

4.6 RESEARCH TRUSTWORTHINESS

According to Collis and Hussey (2009), the value of qualitative research is dependent on the interpretation of the researcher. To this end, Anney (2014), Denzin and Lincoln (2000) and Shenton (2004) proposed that the quality of qualitative research could be assessed based on four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. **Credibility** is analogous to internal validity, and it demonstrates the results obtained from the study are reliable and acceptable (Shenton, 2004). Similarly, Creswell (2009) explains that qualitative validity ensures the accuracy in findings from the researcher, participant or the readers. Credibility can be enhanced by researchers engaging in research over a period of time, continuous observation of subjects under investigation in order to gain in-depth understanding and by triangulation (Elo et al, 2014). In this study, the researcher through the following has improved credibility:

- ✓ The researcher's engagement in the study over a period of time, which enabled the researcher get familiar with case universities. In addition, the researcher has been able to continuously observe the activities, communication, behaviour and relationships in case universities over months.
- ✓ Triangulation: this is a method used by researchers to clarify and establish validity by analysing research questions from multiple sources in a study (Saunders et al 2009). The researcher interviewed different sources in the universities (from key players to students) and this is a category of data triangulation (Easterby-Smith et al 2008). Different sources of interviews reveal both similarities and differences in data, and that has helped develop broader meanings from data collected (Creswell, 2009). Aside the use of interviews, other sources of evidence like direct observation, documentation, archival records and electronic media have been used by the research, which enabled triangulation. For instance, observation made by the researcher has been reconfirmed by respondents, while other times information from interviews served as the basis for observation.
- ✓ Use of Quotes: The use of quotes in qualitative research is a way of reflecting participants' voices in a study (Ollerenshaw and Creswell, 2002), and a strong form of evidence. According to Sandelowski (1994: 480), *"quotes stand as evidence that what the researcher has said is "true" and "foster identification" with research participants by "facilitating" understanding of their points of view."* Quotes have been used to explain particular forms of general phenomena as they appear and occur in individual instances, as well as context specific phenomena. For this reasons, the researcher considers it relevant to utilise quotes in presenting the findings of the study.

Transferability is parallel to the functions of external validity with the purpose of generalising (if findings are applicable to other context), but qualitative research aims to present an in-depth investigation and uniqueness of case studies not generalization. Rather the researcher developed a frame of reference to guide the study and for interview in all cases and for analysing data using patterns in literature (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005) the researcher enhanced transferability.

Dependability takes on the function of reliability and the purpose is to confirm that the research process was systematic, thorough and consistent (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). This considers examining the stability and consistency of responses/findings (Golafshani, 2003). The researcher enhanced dependability by:

- ✓ Reviewing and preparing research questions from literature not self-judgement.
- ✓ Constantly reviewed data transcripts for mistakes.
- ✓ Ensured no drift in conceptualization and interpretation by categorizing data based on themes.
- ✓ Made sure all observed behaviours, activities and communications are all documented.
- ✓ Compared field findings with the literature (Creswell, 2009:191).

Finally, **conformability** represents the notion of neutrality and objectivity in the positivist realm. This aims to clarify data interpretation is conducted in a logical manner (Elo et al, 2014) and corroborates with research findings. This was enhanced by following the procedures explained above in data analysis. Additionally, the researcher utilised available documents (both primary and secondary) to cross-check what was obtained from participants and other similar studies.

4.7 PILOT STUDY

A pilot study offers researchers the opportunity to test and modify aspects of a field study (Yin, 2011). At the start of data collection, interview questions were piloted on three staff in Case Alpha. This was done to ensure interviewees understand questions being asked, and that they do not face issues answering the questions. Additionally, the researcher undertook pilot study to ensure arising ambiguous questions are properly rephrased or deleted before conducting other interviews. The pilot fulfilled its purpose for use. This aided in adding valuable experience to the interview process and it also built the researchers thoughts, confidence and ability to question and probe questions to get more information. At the end of each pilot interview, interviewees were granted the opportunity to provide opinions on the interview structure and questions to improve the quality and validity of the study. To this end, interviewees recommended the re-classification of participants to include students and those recognised as key

players. Also the definition of certain themes had to be clarified and re-defined in some cases for better understanding in order to answer the questions.

After the pilot interviews, the researcher read participants' transcripts carefully to identify lapses in questions such as question clarity, and to ascertain the coverage of questions by the researcher and responses by respondents (including probing questions). After the researcher's deliberation and considering participants' recommendation, the researcher modified the interview questions in the following ways:

- ✓ The researcher reviewed the interview questions and varied those taking students and key players into consideration. For instance, there were questions that could only be answered by staff or key-players, while some could be answered by students and few staff.
- ✓ Some questions were added, some rephrased and some merged considering themes that cropped up during the interviews.

After the modification, two of the pilot participants were consulted to assess the questions and provide feedback before conducting other interviews.

4.8 ETHICAL APPROVAL

Every institution's ethical principle for research with humans involves obtaining ethical approval. With reference to University of Salford rules and regulations, and the guidelines of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the researcher obtained ethical approval (Appendix 1) from the college support office before proceeding for fieldwork. All case universities were presented a copy of the ethical approval in the process of seeking permission. All participants were shown a copy, and given two forms alongside; the information sheet (Appendix 2) and consent form (Appendix 3) to sign before the commencement of interviews. The researcher assured participants of confidentiality and anonymity in the research presentation, and informed them their responses would be used strictly for the sole purpose of this research. In addition, the researcher took several actions to adhere to research ethics and codes of conduct:

- Cases Alpha and Beta approval for conducting the research were obtained from the universities registrars, while Case Cairo issued a letter of acceptance from the chancellor but the researcher did not attach the letter for confidential purpose.
- The researcher ensured all participants filled and signed the consent form before commencing with the interview, and she further assured participants that information provided were going to be used solely for academic purpose and their identity would be anonymised.
- The researcher re-emphasised and reminded participants that if they felt uncomfortable with the questions, they could ask for clarification or refrain from answering the question or even terminate the interview process if the need be.
- Information obtained from interview was reconfirmed with participants and their consent was sought with regards contacting them after the interview with regards the research if the need arises.
- Furthermore, the researcher was guided by the research ethical principles of Bell and Bryman (2007) intended at protecting the interest of research participants and promoting research robustness. The researcher therefore ensured no harm comes to participants; their dignities are respected by protecting their privacy and ensuring confidentiality. Also, the researcher has been truthful to participants on the nature of research, her affiliation and has been transparent in communicating about her research.

4.9 THE HITCHES AND SMILES OF THE JOURNEY

The researcher experienced both the good and bad during the research. The researcher visited several universities to seek permission, some universities turned down with excuses of being busy and not able to commit, some gave peculiar reasons, while some were not straightforward in responding but kept tossing the researcher around. Sometimes, scheduled interviews had to be cancelled for different reasons but later attended. The interesting part of the journey however had been that most of the universities that accepted the conduction of research offered help by introducing the researcher around and ensuring she was familiar with the environment. Other participants personally took the interviewer to appropriate personnel for the study and

that helped a long way. Participants also kept open doors for verification and clearance after the interviews. In addition, the universities demanded for a copy of the thesis for lessons. Despite everything, the interviewer retained her focus. The vicissitudes are actually, what make the journey a worthwhile experience never to be forgotten.

4.10 SUMMARY

To achieve the aim and objectives of this research, the researcher made selections and justifications of appropriate philosophy, approaches, strategy and methods for data collection. The case studies for this research are three universities in Nigeria, two being public and one private. From each university, a number of organisational members from different organisational levels have been interviewed and their opinions asked about organisational learning mechanisms facilitating learning and elements shaping learning in their organisations. This chapter has presented a full description of the researcher's fieldwork, how it was conducted including how data has been collected from different sources and analysed. Finally, the trustworthiness of the research has been discussed.

CHAPTER FIVE

CROSS-CASES DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, data gathered from different sources are analysed and findings arising from data are presented. Interviews, observation and review of documents were conducted and reviewed over a period of five months, between July-November 2014. This allowed the researcher sufficient time to make and keep appointments with participants, observe both formal and informal settings of cases and review relevant documents relating to OL in case universities as explained in chapter four. This chapter is presented as follows: first, participants' composition is presented, outlining the classes of participants employed for interviews- key players, academic, non-academic staff and student representative. Secondly, questions on OLMs are analysed using both themes from the literature and those developed purely from the data by incorporating data from interviews, observation and documents. Under the themes, data from case universities are compared and contrasted to what is obtained and how it is operated in each university. This is then compared with the literature, which either supports or differs in explanation, leading to the findings of the study. After the analysis, a discussion is presented, broadly explaining arising differences with literature regarding OLMs. Finally, a conclusion is drawn as to the overall idea of OLMs in the contexts of case universities, which is, OLMs are considered beyond structural and procedural arrangements to resources that enable organisations acquire, share, interpret and store information.

5.1 PARTICIPANTS REPRESENTATION

Table 5.1 summarises the details of interviews conducted with 38 organisational members of three universities at all levels (four levels) of the organisation hierarchy.

Table 5.1 Selected Universities Respondent Composition

CATEGORY	NUMBER INTERVIEWED	CODING: CASE ALPHA	CODING: CASE BETA	CODING: CASE CAIRO
KEYPLAYERS	11	RA1,RA4,RA7,RA8,RA16	RB2,RB3,RB7,RB11	RC5,RC9
ACADEMIC STAFF	13	RA2,RA3,RA6,RA12,RA14	RB1,RB5,RB6,RB8,RB13	RC1,RC7,RC8
NON-ACADEMIC STAFF	10	RA5,RA10,RA11,RA15	RB4,RB9,RB12	RC2,RC3,RC6
STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE	4	RA9,RA13	RB10	RC4
TOTAL	38	16	13	9

**** RA/RB/RC- Respondent Alpha/Beta/Cairo**

5.2 ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING MECHANISMS

The researcher investigated the types of learning mechanisms operated in the universities and the reasons for utilizing these mechanisms in/for learning by asking semi-structured questions. Common questions asked included: *How are these stages- information acquisition, distribution, interpretation, storage and retrieval facilitated in the university? Are there mechanisms used/employed by the university in learning? If any, what are they? And why does the university employ/use these mechanisms?* Respondents confirmed the use of several mechanisms in facilitating learning in the organisation and they presented reasons for using these mechanisms for learning. These mechanisms range from structures, procedures, forums to resources available for learning, where information and knowledge is shared and deliberated by members of these universities (Popper and Lipshitz, 2000). Respondents further explained that learning mechanisms tend to differ depending on the nature and level of use. By this, a key player in Case Alpha presented that:

“The University has mechanisms it uses to aid learning; there are both formal and informal mechanisms, some of which are static and others change depending on the level, the department involved or situation” (RA4).

Yet another Key player:

“Some mechanisms are unit specific by this I mean they could only be used at either the departmental or faculty level without extending to other parts of the university; this is found in both administrative and academic wings. Students too have mechanisms that suits them; while some platforms for learning are general and collective” (RA1).

Mechanisms informally designed in the university overtime become part of the university and not questioned because they have little or no adverse effects on the system and they facilitate learning easily than the formalized structures. Organisational members felt more relaxed using the informal streams of learning mechanisms. A respondent in Case Alpha explained that informal mechanisms were easily accessed than the formal mechanisms and should be considered a disadvantage but that is not the case. This the respondent emphasized:

“...At the end of the day we look at whether the goal will still be achieved and for us sometimes it's not the means that determines the end so people use the disadvantages on ground to justify their stands- because of the limitations you cannot say it has to be like this. It's therefore serving the purpose and we embrace and encourage it even though we desire to have the ideal (the best) but it's giving us results so most times people learn through informal means” (RA3).

From a different perspective, respondents in Case Beta explained the differences in the use of learning mechanism in the university:

“We hold pally where all staff, students and the VC meet to discuss contemporary issue relating to the development of the university; where we analyse and share ideas and knowledge...it is a discourse” (RB6)

“When you go to departments, there are arrangements that bring people together to share and exchange information, knowledge. For example, there are meetings that usually hold between departmental staff and student representative; or the tier that brings the faculty under one umbrella where discussions and deliberations are held and the end point(s) of the meetings are related to departments and relevant units” (RB12).

While in Case Cairo, a respondent established it that:

“We have learning forums and there are procedures we follow, but there are also factors to consider when it comes to learning in the university” (RC9)

In my observation, it was evident that certain physical and observable structures/activities/settings/forums for learning exist in selected universities that enable them in processing information (learning) at distinct levels and across different levels, similar to the descriptions of Popper and Lipshitz. Some were observed while in operation, while others had structures and points of contact in the universities. Although these mechanisms have been observed and seen, it can be argued that such moments were captions at a point in time capable of being altered. In essence, these

mechanisms though institutionalised, might be or not be operated the same way over a period. Common amongst these structures/procedures include the classroom setting, training and development centres, directorates, media house, SIWES department, organisational members, Manual (notice boards and attention boards, memos, pictures) and electronic (electric boards, internet configurations, website, computer pools), the filing and documentation systems, the libraries.

5.2.1 INTEGRATED OLMs

Researchers (e.g. Drach-Zahavy and Pud, 2010; Golembiewski, 2010; Lipshitz et al 2002) opined that integrated mechanisms are organisational learning mechanisms that are designed and operated by the same clients. These mechanisms are accepted across organisational levels because they promote participation in learning. In defining the types of OLMs used in selected universities, respondents were questioned on the initiation (design), implementation and operations of OLMs; and whether these mechanisms were operated in conjunction to or away from daily duties by asking: *who designs/organises and operate these mechanisms? And when are these mechanisms operated/ are these mechanisms operated as part of or away from daily functions? Explain.* According to respondents of selected universities, the design and use of mechanisms are done by university administration, individual units or/and organisational members as long as they follow due process and aid learning in order to attain the university's goals. This an academic staff in Case Alpha stated:

"You see in this university, the organisation and use of learning mechanisms is both joint and individual effort, depending on the mechanism. It could be jointly as in involving every department or level in the university, it can also be just one department or level being individual to arrange and use what they consider appropriate. So it is a combination of both" (RA14)

Similarly, a key player in Case Beta presented a close explanation but clearly identified the differences in terms of use:

"Organizing and operating any learning mechanism is done by members of every unit, although it can also be specific. if it is for the academic wing then that is the responsibility of the members involved but if it is for the whole university then the administration is the responsible point... for example, lectures are organised by lecturers who determine how they want it to be..."(RB11).

Put differently, a respondent in Case Cairo identified:

"...The process and line of operations of these mechanisms are set by the university administration while they are designed and operated by organisational members" (RC2)

It was further obtained in Cases Alpha and Beta that the design and use of mechanisms by other levels/units (departmental or school) beside the strategic level involves obtaining an official consent. A proposed plan is expected to be presented to the VC through the appropriate channel (from HOD to Dean to VC). The relevant committee scrutinizes the proposal or the senate before decisions are made. Positive outcomes are communicated to the system on the new arrangement or process, and in some situations, trainings are provided for the use of mechanism; similar to expert learning systems proposed by Kars-Unluoglu and Easterby-Smith (2011). To this end, responses from Cases Alpha and Beta explain this:

"Once decisions are taken by the senate ... it is communicated down usually with compliance conditions. It is now the responsibility of heads (either at faculty or departmental level) to ensure compliance in using mechanisms. The first way to ensure compliance is to make sure everyone understands the requirement and because of the channel of communication that is already entrenched in the system such that members of different departments must ensure that they pass through the right channel to ensure adherence (so there are checks and balances to ensure compliance)" (RB7).

"...departments, schools or individuals write to the university management seeking permission either to organise a workshop or some sort of training with reasons as to why it is relevant. On approval, members of the school or department are informed through the appropriate channel. We recently had a workshop on change management organised by staff who attended the conference in Abuja" (RA4)

A respondent however stressed that new integrated OLMs in Case Alpha seem not to be frequently developed because those in use are accepted by most organisational members and considered reliable in the system, despite the weaknesses.

"Since I joined this university twenty years ago there are learning activities and forums as well as media of communications still in place which are acceptable in the system and I doubt if such will change anytime soon because they serve their purpose and that is what matters" (RA5).

This study identifies some organisationally accepted learning mechanisms designed and operated by same clients in selected universities, although some mechanisms are unique to a particular university.

- a. **Educational classroom meeting:** This is an institutionalised structure and the main point for the university's operation. The classroom as a primary integrated mechanism is designed and operated by both staff and students. In all universities, academic staff specifically design and operate lectures in classrooms with students- a different organisational level- as their primary function. Students also design and organise classroom activities for their learning purpose with or without involving academic staff

as the case may be: thus contributing to the organisational learning process. Through classroom education, the acquisition, distribution, interpretation, and storage/use of information and knowledge take place.

“...The classroom is a special learning setting. In class, we acquire and share information and knowledge. Also in class we discuss, challenge and criticize” (RA10)

“The classroom is one major learning mechanism... students exchange and share thoughts, experiences generally and on topic under discussion in class, usually after an introduction by the lecturer...only in rare cases we deviate” (RA9).

Classroom setting as learning mechanism is understood as a unique mechanism that not only differentiates the information processing and learning structure of a university from other organisations, but it provides diverse experiences. Similarly, a respondent from Case Beta described this mechanism as:

“The classroom setting is unique. It is an integral part of every learning institution like ours. In class you get information, you share information, you build and develop unique perspectives and also in classrooms we take records of information ...the classroom is everything in a university.” (RB11)

Distinguishing the operation of this mechanism in Case Cairo, from what is obtained in Cases Alpha and Beta, a respondent explained that:

“When it comes to learning the school is designed in a three pattern theme; lectures, classes and interactive and every lecturer must be engaged in this learning technique to bring your message across and the essence of the whole pattern is not just going into the class to teach but to give room for a participatory atmosphere. Where at some point you break and students ask questions it becomes interactive and at a point you engage in some form of practice or assessment to ensure that both parties-the students and the lecturers have a symbiotic relation to confirm and make sure what your giving out is understood and given room for innovative thinking of the students...” (RC7).

In all universities, this mechanism was observed in operation as a medium through which information is processed and exchange occurs between organisational members and a core function/routine of the university. Information processed in the classroom is mediated and transferred across the system through organisational channels like staff analysis and reports, E-mails, dialogue groups, thesis, assignments and presentation documents and in cases of recorded experiences, duplications are made and preserved at the department and library (Schechter and Feldman, 2010). Special organisational members-Academic staff- on behalf of the organisation also operate classroom structure as an integrated mechanism; thus exhibiting features of “**supervisory mechanisms**” as explained by Drach-Zahavy and Pud (2010) that supervisory mechanisms are

mechanisms which are both integrated and non-integrated. They are integrated in the sense of being operated at a lower or different level, but considered non-integrated in that they are mainly operated by specialized members/ or member of a higher level taking responsibility of information collection, analysis and use in the organisation.

- b. In-house training/ developmental programs:** all case universities provide some form of training to organisational members following designed training calendar, although some trainings are organised outside the calendar. However, the emphasis given to human development differs between universities. Courses provided in-house are usually fundamental and relevant to the university's operation and performance (Kar-Unluoglu and Easterby-smith 2011; Popper and Lipshitz, 2000). Training in these universities is considered as part of their operations. By this, interviewees explained that training was a routine because: firstly, it involves schooling, guiding and instructing them and other members of the organisation (students); secondly, it is a standard practice and the means through which the university learns, improves and develop its members, in essence, it is interwoven with the universities functioning (Arshad et al., 2016). Different categories of in-house training have been identified depending on who designs and operates the mechanism; and the organisational level/unit involved. With reference to the former, a respondent in Case Alpha acknowledged:

"We have a department responsible for staff training and development; the training and development unit under the advancement directorate. During trainings staff are given the opportunities to get acquainted... these trainings could be for specific levels or departments or staff as the case maybe. Other times we have a blend, but it's rarely the case now...secondly, at departmental level we organise trainings..." (RA7)

Similarly, it was presented in Case Beta that:

"The advancement department organises in-house trainings according to the need of organisational members. These trainings are usually carried out at the university's learning centre, utilising both internal and external expertise" (RB13)

While from Case Cairo:

"Trainings are organised by the ICT service for both students and staff depending on their development needs" (RC1)

"Students and staff are expected to undertake compulsory computer application training" (Case Cairo website, 2015)

Case Alpha organises four kinds of in-house trainings: (1) *Executive and Managerial development*: this is new (it was jointly done with trainings provided for administrative

and academic staff) and targeted at key players of the institution, with the aim of developing and enhancing their managerial skills. (2) *Admin/clerical staff training*: this training are organised for the administrative wing, usually bi-annually. (3) *Academic staff training*: conducted either based on departmental, schools or general educational requirements. (4) *Induction and refresher training*: conducted for new and existing staff as the need arises. Finally, (5) *cross training*: this training could occur at all levels and not organized by the training centre, but by individual schools or departments (Case Alpha Evaluation report, 2013:15). Backing the report, respondents state that:

“Every new staff goes through induction, while we the old ones have refresher courses. As you get acquainted with the system, you get the opportunity to attend more training depending on your strand (as an academic or non-academic staff)...for the management level, they have executive trainings...” (RA3)

“...workshops are also organised in different departments and directorates to cross-train staff” (RA7)

Although another respondent identified the on-the-job training, which occurs naturally with little or no arrangement:

“...we also learn on the job...it becomes part of you with time” (RA15)

While **Case Beta** operates five forms of in-house trainings: (1) *Academic staff trainings*- conducted for academic staff of all levels (key players, operational). Sometimes it is organised and operated jointly, other times trainings are done based on individual schools. Academic staff trainings are the frequently organised trainings. (2) *Non-academic/administrative staff trainings*- these are trainings organised for the administrative arm, occurring once every term. Nevertheless, at times impromptu trainings crop up. (3) *Cross-training*: these are organised either by the advancement unit under the instruction of the management or by schools or departments. Cross training occurs when a participant(s) of external learning programs are expected to train their colleagues or other organisational members. (4) *Induction and refreshers training*: these are organised for new and existing staff of the university, carried out periodically. (5) *Student training*: trainings designed for students but not a frequent practice.

“The university organises different forms of training. Those for academic and non-academic staff and sometimes-special training for students are provided. Individual schools organise trainings too...” (RB2)

“...Just as staff here get trained, I get certain courses and training opportunities as a Rep.” (RB10)

Training in **Case Cairo** is in-house, the university has a conference and ICT centre where refresher courses and subsequent trainings are held, but participants attend conferences externally. External consultants are often invited to train organisational members, while IT staff do minor training on IT needs or other simple activities and other organisational members. Respondents made no mention of external training; rather they identified in-house conferences, which are organised with both internal and external participants in mind. While at Case Cairo, the researcher witnessed a three day conference that occurred in the university on contemporary issues in higher education (with external participants in attendance), of which a document was obtainable from a participant.

"We have our training and courses like the refresher course in the multi-purpose hall or ICT centre depending on the number..." (RC2)

"Our ICT staff organise trainings. Sometimes they handle the training or other capable hands, other times we invite consultants." (RC6)

This categorisation of trainings says little about the content, lessons and contribution of training to learning offered by universities. While examining training documents (manuals, reports, management proceeding), it was understood that these documents provide basis for comparison on how the mechanism is operated for learning. During in-house training in Case Alpha, aside from tapping and sharing diverse information and knowledge, participants are opportune to reflect and make contributions to the training sessions individually and in groups. This process of reflection permits learning (identifying lessons learnt), and how it could be applicable in the university (Kolb and Kolb, 2005). Identified lessons are presented as a report to the university.

"We don't just attend the trainings... we are allowed to ingest and digest in groups before we present our contributions, both during the training and to the university (written report) for processing and how to move the university" (RA14).

On the contrary, a respondent argued that some training provided were standard and stale. This therefore does not motivate active reflection because it is repetitive, therefore failing to create dynamism and promoting little participation (Kar-Unluoglu and Easterby-smith 2011). This the respondent argued:

"...the major problem with some training is that they remain the same year in year out and with that I don't feel push to challenge my thoughts or rather make contributions because I am not motivated. Although you hear nice presentations put forward by colleagues every time..." (RA12)

Reflection and learning through in-house training in Case Cairo is quite different. Here, the operation of the mechanism is evaluated after the course to ascertain lessons learnt and how it can be applied to the university. Reflection in Case Cairo occurs during and after the training (Clayphan et al 2013; Kolb 1984). A respondent also opined this:

“As I did mention earlier, conferences are held and they are real platforms for learning. You meet developed minds, you chat, you exchange ideas, and it gives you the room to reason differently. It is a worthy experience. We look forward to that... going by the university’s open door policy and flexible approach, each conference organised must have an evaluation. This evaluation looks at learning points, thoughts and methods of applying lessons to the university...” (RC9)

What was obtained in Case Beta was an explanation of the usefulness of in-house training to learning and development. This structure is considered accessible by organisational members, which in turn promotes participation and provides the opportunity for learning and interaction with colleagues from different schools (Kar-Unluoglu and Easterby-Smith 2011) who are also learning contacts:

“In-house training is another forum that promotes learning here...we get to interact with colleagues we don’t see every day and that way we share opinions, information and keep updated. By that I mean we learn from each other in that course...” (RB6)

- c. **Meetings:** meetings are fundamental to the operation of the universities (Romano and Nunamake, 2001) and are organized weekly, monthly, quarterly or yearly according to the university cycle plan and as the need arises; either by the same or different clients. In **Case Alpha**, official meetings like executive meetings are organised by the registrar based on an annual plan of activities that inform the agendas of meetings. Other official forms of meeting at departmental or committee levels are organised by the registrar or Deans of school or director (for directorates). Meetings in this university are considered less strenuous and a mechanism for information acquisition and interpretation, with the minutes of the meeting held as the product of the interaction and as a check tool for implementing the outcomes of the meeting. The minutes of the meeting are also stored and retrieved for organisational use.

“Everyone is aware of the congresses we hold, these are meetings held depending on the level and matter involved, for instance we have the senate congress held on quarterly basis for the discussion and evaluation of university’s developmental matters... During meetings set actions are reviewed for progress following previous meeting outcomes” (RA11).

A strategic form of meeting at Alpha is the “*Audit Review*”. This OLM aims to review the overall performance (value for money) of the university. This yearly review helps the

university analyse and use the information retrieved from different departments. It is a session of deliberation, careful analysis and reflection as well. The top management- specifically the senate and governing body of the university plans this review. A key player presents this as:

“I engage in the annual audit review of the university. This is a meeting for collation and analysis of departmental performances... I can clearly say it fosters learning” (RA16)

For **Case Beta**, meetings are organised and operated by the same clients only in few exceptional cases that the organisers differ from the clients. This happens only when the meeting entails the participation of the visitor-the State Governor- that is when representing parastatals become the organisers- *“the only meeting organised by the ministry is that with the Governor or his representative” (RB7)*. At meetings information is acquired, shared, interpreted and documented, permitting individuals and the group to contribute. A respondent puts forward a unique view, arguing that learning occurs at meetings:

“Each meeting has a purpose...At meetings; we share information which together we try to make sense of as it relates to us. In the course, we hear different perspectives... whether people are aware or not learning occurs” (RB2)

While in **Case Cairo**, meetings are organised for Board members, for university management, between staff and management and the town hall meetings (for staff, students, and the management and external parties in some occasions). These meetings are forums for information acquisition, distribution, interpretation and documentation.

“We come together to learn, first of all we have what we call “town hall meetings” that happens regularly (at least twice a semester) and there are for both students and staff. So all students and staff come together to share ideas, err out their views and sometimes on that ground we make decisions and students come to express their own opinions and desires and all that.” (RC3)

“We have town hall meetings twice a year. Every staff and student is notified on the date and time (a period is usually dedicated for the session), also board members and scholars from other schools attend...The meeting is usually educative and interactive” (RC8)

All meetings of Case Cairo are organised and operated by organisational members except for Board meetings, which are operated by only selected key players (the VC, Pro-chancellor and registrar) on behalf of the university, making Board Meetings non-integrated OLMs. Additionally, Board meetings and town hall meetings are operated away from task performance. Organisational members' involvement in diverse meetings and across different levels aids their participation and presents the ground for

crossbreeding and exchange of relevant ideas and knowledge gained from different meetings (Lipshitz et al 2007).

- d. **Pally:** this is an informal interactive forum uniquely operated in [Case Beta](#) that was initially organised and operated by academic staff and students with the aim of acquiring, sharing and debating on information, ideas and knowledge. However, over the years, it became institutionalised involving all organisational members and operated away from task function. It is held twice a year.

“Pally actually started like a joke. Mr X initiated it and very few staff and students were in attendance. Subsequently more colleagues became interested...before we knew it, the school management became aware of it. Today pallies are organised based on top management, academic, non-academic staff and students’ contributions.” (RB9)

“...pally is usually organised twice a year and around mid-semester” (RB13)

Pally enables the processing of information involving all components of the university. The forum allows the acquisition, exchange and cross-fertilization of information and knowledge. At the end of the day, learning outcomes are recorded for documentation and implementation. This is a clear example of an informally initiated learning mechanism becoming an acceptable part of the system.

- e. **Students’ quizzes:** this is another mechanism identified in only [Case Cairo](#). Internally organised quizzes are mechanisms, not only for learning but also for knowledge exchange. Students’ quizzes are organised by student support (student affairs) department under the permission of university management; several lecturers and club leaders depending on the area supervise quizzes. During quizzes and other learning competitions, organisational members in attendance acquire and share information, and deliberate. Aside student participants, other organisational members are permitted to contribute to the forum by presenting their observation, providing critical ideas and information, backing participants and providing them with feedbacks.

“We have educative forums and learning gatherings like the quizzes, book clubs and talks besides classes to help us learn... we are assessed by the examiners and people there...” (RC4)

“The clubs are geared towards learning, exploring, reviving and showcasing the different cultures, norms, traditions, and ethnics of our society, especially in our multi-cultured University.” (Case Cairo’s Website)

5.5.2 NON-INTEGRATED OLMs

Non-integrated learning mechanisms are organised by different clients and operated by organisational members in processing information on behalf of the university. These forms of OLM are standardized in the nature of their operations, involving the repetition of particular patterns even though the outcomes tend to differ. Particular and special person or departments on behalf and for the university's operation (Popper and Lipshitz, 1998: 2000) usually operate them. Nevertheless, members of a particular level operate some non-integrated mechanisms in these universities but not by specific or special persons, in such cases the operation of the mechanism is subject to change of members. One of the selected university also has non-integrated OLM operated by specific individuals which are not subject to change unless in moments of uncontrollable circumstances. In selected universities, non-integrated OLMs are in use and mediated by other OLMs at different levels as the need arises. Non-integrated OLMs of these universities include:

- a. **External trainings and developmental programs:** external training/ developmental program is one non-integrated OLM operated by all three universities in learning but are subject to different explanation. In Case Alpha, Some training are organised externally but operated and consumed by staff of the university, therefore undertaking the learning on behalf of the organisation. On most occasions, what is learnt or knowledge acquired by participants in the course of training is made available in the system through cross-training- participants cross-train colleagues- as directed by the university management.

"This university generally learns from individuals and groups in the system because people have opportunities to develop themselves, to go to conferences both sponsored and non-sponsored by individuals, the university and different organisations. Members of the university are continuously learning new things and getting exposed to new methodologies, new technologies and new ideas and when they return they share this with their colleagues and the system. They are expected to write a report to the university about their experiences detailing suggestions about how the system can be improved upon based on what they have learnt. Other times they cross train. In a number of cases the university has taken this up and has implemented some of these suggestions which has improved the capacity and the capability of the university as a whole" (RA16)

"From and through trainings organised externally we learn" (RA2)

However, another special form of training common in the university is the Post graduate training offered to organisational members:

"The university also sponsors its staff for international trainings and programmes like Masters and PhD which are much more long term... all are learning sources" (RA6).

While university staff operate compulsory national and international trainings in Case Beta based on the university's developmental requirements and on behalf of the university, these trainings are designed and organised by external parties. In some cases, trainings are organised by external bodies like the State Ministry of Education at the learning centre of Case Beta, and operated by staff of the university.

"During periodic reviews, Government parastatals investigate the university's performance and try to identify our needs... at times the ministry of education sends consultants and trainers to provide relevant trainings and activities to members of staff...and when the need be we train others too" (RB8)

This forum presents the opportunity for staff on training to interact with different personnel, scholars, in the process learn, and process information on behalf of the university. On return, other organisational members are cross-trained by participants of the trainings.

In Case Cairo, organisational members, specifically staff of different levels participate in sponsored conferences on behalf of the university; and not special delegates only. Staff who attend conferences process information as representatives of the university. Processed information or what is learnt is in turn communicated to the university in report forms, at town hall meetings, through personal rapport as symposiums and other small interactive forums are not properly established in the university as pointed by a respondent:

"I believe that can be deepened if there are rooms for seminars, symposium and other internal gatherings it could be on faculty levels..." (RC1)

Yet another respondent stressed:

"There should be a structure a forum where members of this noble university relate on matters of learning; learning from research, getting to share acquired knowledge from external sources like conferences and much more. At the moment the true structure is lacking." (RC7)

Organisational members also engage in self- sponsored conferences depending on individual drive, and not wholly waiting on the university.

"I in person thrive to learn and improve myself..." (RC8)

In consideration of the above, training is subject to features of **supervisory OLMs**, that is when cross-training of externally acquired knowledge occurs, but in the absence of that, then external training are strictly non-integrated OLMs.

- b. Students as non-integrated OLMs:** students have been identified as learning mechanisms in all universities through their programs- the Student industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) operated in Cases Alpha and Beta. Additionally, through joint research in Case Beta, students are able to process information on behalf of their university. While in Case Cairo what is obtained is the student external quizzes and competitions. In Case Alpha, respondents identified SIWES as a practical scheme undertaken by students in selected departments and at different levels.

“And from industrial schemes we learn and so the students” (RA2)

“In my department Industrial work experience is compulsory” (RA13)

This scheme is designed by National Universities Commission (NUC) but utilised by universities. This program permits students to attend a six-month practical fieldwork with staff allocated as supervisors for that period. During this period, students are trained and given the opportunity to learn from colleagues and other members of practical institutions, and they put to practice theories learnt. Students and supervisors are obliged to provide a detailed report of experience and learning outcomes to the university, alongside a presentation. This scheme facilitates the acquisition, analysis, distribution and storage of information and knowledge on behalf of the university. In most cases, such students are absorbed into the system on completion of their degrees. It was revealed by interviewees in Case Beta that most students of the school of humanities engage in SIWES but at different levels:

“Students of the faculty of Education go to the field for their work experience scheme in their third year...” (RB3)

Another respondent stated:

“Accounting students go on field practice at the end of year two and return to face departmental courses...this experience directs the choice of courses to go for...” (RB5)

The six months practical experience enables students to learn from real time experience, engaging them in situations that require them contributing their quota in the operation of the organisation or their school of practice. This therefore builds students learning capabilities and helps them make informed decisions on behalf of the organisation and their university. SIWES enables students learn on behalf of the university and they relate their learning back to the university through reports and presentations, identifying key lessons and its usefulness to the system (Eyler, 2002;

Eyler et al 1996). This is some sort of a give and take process and relationship between the university and students- the university organises the field practice by identifying organisations and schools for students also making provision for supervisors, while the students contribute to the learning of the university.

“Students are exposed to other learning experiences like they go on IT, some practice here on campus... so they go beyond the theoretical aspect they get to practice what they have been taught and based on that they report and are being examined...” (RB13)

Students also process information and learn on behalf of the university through the joint research they undertake. These researches are designed and organised by the university through key players and the advancement unit. While they are operated by some students organised into groups, based on research topics or problems. Students are presented with the research problem or topics and resources to provide the university with findings, possible solutions and directions. During fieldwork at Case Beta, the researcher was opportune to observe a research community discussion and analysis between students and a key player (academic) on a propose project in the key player’s office and the minutes of the meeting was sighted and explained by the key player. With this practice in place, students learn individually and on behalf of the university by processing acquired information for organisational learning and use.

“My participation in one of the organized joint research has taught me a lot as a person. It has enlightened me about research, responsibility...and it is one way the school learns” (RB10)

On a different note, external quizzes are organised either by other private HEIs or by organisations as forums for students’ interaction and learning outside the four corners of their classroom.

“The one I attended was organised by XX University [a private university]. Organisations do that to award scholarships to outstanding students.”(RC1)

The students of Case Cairo do not only utilise this forum to process information on behalf of the university, but as a medium to boost their individual skills, reputation, recognition and that of the university they represent. Beside quizzes, students also engage in writing and other display competitions that are awarded financially or non-financially. With relation to this mechanism, students process information and engage in learning activities on behalf of the university; and this can hardly be operated by organisational members of higher levels, only students.

- c. **External visitation and consultation representatives:** This form of non-integrated OLM was evident in Cases Alpha and Beta but organised and operated quite differently according to university provision. In **Case Alpha**, external visitations are organised periodically with other sister institutions for learning and consultations. Specific staff or a team of staff are usually allotted the responsibility to visit other similar institutions based on participating institutions memorandum of understanding. Through these visiting agents (representatives of the institution), the university is able to process information for use by the whole system. The visiting and consultation is a common practice organized by the directorate of academic planning and monitoring (academic affairs) and operated by specific staff. Staff allocated with these tasks are subject to rotation (different institutions over different periods) or complete change but the organizers remain the same.

“Through interactions with colleagues and other universities this university gets to know what is happening and this is done frequently. We visit other universities and interact...others come here as well. So what you observe in other universities you can encourage it to be introduced in own university” (RA3)

Aside from this arrangement being a learning mechanism because it facilitates learning from other institutions through observation and consultation, it also provides the means for role rotation (another mechanism) which builds members and the organisation’s experiences (DiBella et al 1996). Experience gained in the process of institution rotation offers the staff and the university the opportunity of diverse information processing, especially interpretation because those involved in the visit are quite experienced and they become more comprehensive and critical in the analyses of acquired information before use, and this influences the learning in the university.

While in **Case Beta**, external visitations and consultations with other HEIs (not only sister institutions) are organised by the academic planning and monitoring unit in conjunction with the advancement unit; but operated by key players of Case Beta on behalf of and, according to the provision of the university. The key players observe and process information for learning in their university, using this mechanism. In Case Beta, other staff are not used or rotated to operate this mechanism like Case Alpha, rather only key players operate the mechanism. A key player stressed;

“...Then key staff like the deans, HODs are expected to visit other universities in order to obtain what is occurring in those systems so as to keep us updated” (RB7)

Yet another respondent acknowledged the benefit of learning using this mechanism:

"We learn from universities and other higher institutions that are established. We enjoy the benefits of learning from their success and failures because it offers us the chance to be better" (RB1)

Aside from key players' visiting and consulting other HEIs, other academic staff operate as non-integrated OLMs. Most academic staff of Case Beta operate as part-time staff at other HEIs and in the process consult and learn on behalf of the university. In this situation, the part-time staff organise the mechanism because they willingly opt in for participation at other institutions; and they operate it as well because they process information they can utilise at the host (Case Beta) University.

"We get the information we need and learn from part time staff...they work and are part of other institutions like the college of education, universities" (RB13).

- d. Committee system/meetings:** committee system as non-integrated OLM is operated in public universities-Cases Alpha and Beta-. In Case Alpha, Committees are set up by the university management and operated by special participants. These participants process information, make appropriate decisions on behalf and for the good of the university in entirety. Members of committees often acquire and process information related to their make-up purpose and objectives, before it becomes organisational:

"We run a committee system it's a good means of information exchange and learning. Every committee has regular meetings... The way information is disbursed could not have been efficient if not for committees which promote the collaboration of different minds. And there are departmental representatives who are just to communicate them through memos and other means" (RA5)

Similar to Case Alpha, Case Beta committees are designed and organised by the university management while members of different schools and departments operate them. Staff of Case Beta are obliged by the university to be members of one or more committees. This is because having staff participate establishes a democratic representation of organisational members' opinions and fosters dynamism of OLMs (Kar-Unluoglu and Easterby-smith 2011). To this, a respondent explains:

"Every member of staff is expected to be part of or participate in committees, existing committees or those set up temporarily...in our university's Act section (X), the VC appoints committees consisting of members across different departments and units to carry out functions on behalf of the university as it may determine..." (RB7)

In this capacity, committees however acquire, interpret, share information: thus learning on behalf of the university. Respondents stress that committees play very important roles in processing information, learning and decision making of the university. Because in committee systems, diverse views are found, knowledge and experiences are contributed while processing information and exchange occurs (Chou, 2005). In essence, it is a platform where information and knowledge is acquired, shared, consulted and criticised in order learn and to define a clear meaning for organisational absorption and use. This is similar to the notion of Lines et al (2011:167) that *“horizontal and vertical differentiation and the division of tasks lead to the development of knowledge asymmetries between individuals and groups in the organisation”*.

“Our committee system is a power house ... It enables accessing and sharing information and also learning from people’s experiences, knowledge...” (RB9)

This study identified that committee system portrays unique features as OLMs: (1) **integrated OLMs**- they organise and operate certain learning mechanisms themselves like meetings and reviews, (2) **Non-integrated OLMs**- they are formed for special assignments or purpose, and in this capacity they tend to process defined information (based on designated aspect) on behalf of the university. Possessing the features of both integrated and non-integrated OLMs, defines committee systems as **supervisory OLMs** also. (3) **Dual-purpose OLMs**: procedures and activities of committees are carried out in conjunction with task performance- in line with the duties of the job. These committees arise because of or in response to issues affecting the affairs of the university. Therefore, committee systems are **multi-purpose OLMs**.

- e. **Directorates as Non-integrated OLMs**: special directorates and units under the control and operation of specific or specialised individuals in **Case Alpha** collect, analyse, disseminate and store information relevant to the operation and performance of the university. Examples of these directorates/units are the research and publications, registry, academic affairs. While undertaking research investigation, these units were sited, visited and staff of the units were also interviewed for clarification. In addition, on the university website the functions of these units are outlined with regards information processing and these functions are their core task roles interwoven in their operations. This an academic staff claims:

“Well as earlier said there are information-units that are here ... almost everything concerning information is done through them. In fact there are directorates” (RA12).

“The Office of Research and Development, (ORD)... where the University employed Research Fellows that conduct researches and present findings accordingly in journals and forums for discussions and implementation” (Case Alpha Website)

The director of research and publication as a non-integrated mechanism processes information relevant to the system, and through interactive, paper and electronic media the information/ knowledge is made available to the organisation, where the implementation will be further discussion if necessary. In this case, the director is the sole non-integrated mechanism. Other times, the crewmembers of the directorate perform several information processing phases individually or as a team. For instance, information is acquired individually analysed collectively, disseminated and stored centrally.

“This unit operates through research carried out individually or by the whole unit. Using myself as an example I have links that I get information from or I attend research seminars in different countries from where I get information and acquire knowledge. Whatever I learn I present it critically to the university using different means. From such other members of the school identify opportunities and much more. Sometimes my staff and colleagues carryout assigned functions: some gather the information, others analyse, and documentation is also done by someone that is it.” (RA8)

In the academic affairs unit (under the registry department) the system analyst is responsible for analysing and evaluating the teaching and learning processes for quality assurance and other IT activities and updates; and also liaises with units to capture data for analysis purposes in the university (Case Alpha website).

- f. **Board meeting:** board meetings are operated in Case Cairo and are organised by the board secretary- the registrar acts in this capacity-following previous meeting's suggestions. At board meetings, information is acquired, disseminated, interpreted and minute down for documentation on behalf of other organisational members (whole university) concerning the entire affairs of the university. A respondent commented that the outcome of board meetings are communicated as directives or policies, where organisational members are expected to oblige:

“Once it's a decision it simply means it has been taken and then it is passed across whichever way you interpret it is your business but the important thing is that you do what they want. But in case of concerns there are town hall meetings where staff, management and students meet so you wait for this town hall meeting to be able to err yourself out if you care...” (RC7)

Organisational members are however chanced to provide feedback on the decisions at town hall meetings and representing board members note their concerns for possible alteration at upcoming board meeting.

5.2.3 DESIGNATED OLMs

Designated learning mechanisms facilitate organisational learning away from role functions. They are usually utilised outside work routine and responsibilities (Popper and Lipshitz 1998: 2000; Lipshitz et al 2007). Some of these mechanisms are operated in some universities while no one designated OLM is found to be in operation in all universities.

- a. **Unions, associations and clubs:** the basic types of unions identified in Case Alpha are: Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU), Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU) and Universities Student Union (USU). Activities of unions are carried out external to role performance of staff and students. Memberships of such groups are voluntary and not an obligation, but members are obliged to undertake certain responsibilities and adhere to the union's principles. Unions are also learning mechanisms through which the university can learn.

“...the unions, staff unions and student union for us are mechanisms for learning” (RA9)

Similar to Case Alpha, the above forms of unions are found in Case Beta. Activities of these unions are held both externally and internally. Externally, national union conferences are organised where members of university unions from all Government universities participate. While internally, union activities are provided for in schools (it occurs in Case Beta); but away from task performance. As earlier noted, membership is not compulsory for staff, but members are obliged to abide by the guidelines of the union. While in Case Beta, students are encouraged to be members of unions and associations with a driving force towards making it compulsory.

“All students are expected to be union members... students initially frown at it but later appreciate the decision because everybody learns from the union, its meetings and activities and communications between members and management representatives”(RB10).

Unions and associations create the platform for interaction where individuals contribute and the group as well towards the activities of universities. Learning is

surely one of these activities. Information is however acquired, disseminate and giving meaning to during union activities like meetings and conferences, thereby fostering learning. Although carried out away from task and daily activities, their activities and agendas are targeted towards achieving better and quality educational services and fair treatment of members (Balkaran, 2011). Whatever learning or information is processed at staff union is reported to the university by its representative- the secretary- for documentation, and processed information considered relevant to the university can be absorbed at the organisational level through mediating mechanisms or naturally. For student union, the dean of student's affairs or his representative presents the report to the university management on behalf of students. Whereas those union activities occurring at the national level are usually documented (capturing the activities, debates, outcomes and decisions) by the national board and sent to all member universities.

A completely different designated OLM found in Case Cairo is the student's club and societies. Student clubs vary depending on students' interest and availability. These clubs are operated away from classroom functions. Unlike Cases Alpha and Beta, Case Cairo does not permit the operation of unions, in fact, the university is not unionized; and so union activities are not welcomed by the system. Students are only allowed to participate in associations known as student clubs and societies. These are forums for learning and information processing outside daily school activities. Students learn from colleagues and others in the club and what is learnt most times is actually consumable by the university:

"I belong to the Arts and Culture club. The club aims at learning, showcasing and preserving our culture."...we do have cultural days and other events to show what we do." (RC4)

- b. Pally:** this is a designated OLM operated only in Case Beta. Although pally is organised and operated by organisational members, it is operated away from task performance. As much as organisational members are encouraged to participate in pally, it is no one's responsibility or role function to organise and participate. Despite pally is held away from organisational routine functions and procedures; it is considered a useful learning mechanism- *"basically we learn through a relaxed forum known as pally" (RB5)* - because it facilitates information processing, individual and organisational learning.

- c. **Town hall meeting:** Similar to pally operated in Case Beta, Case Cairo organise town hall meetings that are operated by organisational members away from their organisational functions. Participation is encouraged but not mandatory. Organisational members make it a point of duty to attend because it is the easiest medium through which organisational members are sure their voices will be heard and noted. It is however considered a useful forum for learning, information processing, and receipt of feedback and concern expression.

5.2.4 DUAL-PURPOSE OLMs

Most formal and informal OLMs in selected universities are operated in conjunction with routine functions (Popper and Lipshitz, 1998:2000; Lipshitz et al 2007). The above-identified integrated and non-integrated OLMs in Case Alpha are associated to task performance and in line with achieving the university's goals and objectives, except for union activities, which are voluntary and not interwoven with primary functions. The university is a special organisation capable of undertaking vast activities unlike other organisations. Aside the academic and administrative functions of staffs, they are also saddled with other ad-hoc activities that enhance their roles and the life of the university. Examples of these functions include steering or conducting committees, representing the university externally in conferences and other forums like other university visitations.

Aside Pally, all other identified integrated and non-integrated OLMs of Case Beta are carried out in conjunction with task performance and in line with the university's goals. These mechanisms are accessed and operated in line with responsibilities and functions of organisational members allocated by the top management, schools or departments. The committee system however operates beyond a dual-purpose leaning mechanism because it portrays distinctive features of OLMs.

Dual purpose OLMs of Case Cairo include: classroom settings, in-house training and meetings; this is because they are associated with organisational operations and in line with achieving organisational goals. Organisational members are aware of their relevance and how inseparable they are to the organisation's functioning.

5.2.5 MEDIATION AND SUPPORT OLMs

These mechanisms facilitate the process of learning in selected universities. Mediation mechanisms are learning mechanisms that link different stages of information processing. The support mechanisms aid the operation of other mechanisms, although some mechanisms perform both functions of mediating and supporting depending on their use. For instance, they link classroom level learning with system level learning. These mechanisms are institutionalised activities, practices, procedures or resources in use in learning and as defined by these universities. Furthermore, such mechanisms are inseparable from the operation of other OLMs earlier noted because they stand as key either operators or support that enables the operation of other learning mechanisms.

- a. **Organisational members:** In Case Alpha, academic staff (lecturers) have been identified as the focal point between classroom level learning and other levels of the university and also between different learning levels-individual, group and organisational. Through these mechanisms-academic staff-, the university learns organisationally or not; is in relating their experiences or processed information from classroom activities to other organisational members that they become aware of the knowledge and work on it (Crossan et al 1995; Schulz 2001).

"I ... learn a lot from the stories of our students because we permit them to research wide. That is what education is all about... I once shared my student's experience with a friend colleague and he drew great ideas from it... today I can tell you that student's experience is in use... students make the university too" (RA12).

Academic staffs establish direct contacts with student level of learning and other learning levels than any personnel of the university. This contact enables information exchange, processing through interaction, thus developing new ideas and meanings evident in notes, assignments, reports, handouts and other storage facilities. It was further noted by another respondent that although academic staff are the focal points as mechanisms other staff too are learning mechanisms. By this the respondent states:

"I also try to use the structures in my department and faculty to convey information and learning to other components... on personal rapport, I share information informally" (RA10)

More extensively presented, respondents in Case Beta defined "organisational members" as learning mechanisms beyond academic staff as identified in Case Alpha. Respondents revealed that organisational members are the main mechanisms driving organisational learning of the university. By this, a respondent says:

"I will say all human capacity found in the university make learning possible. Staff have their roles and they have to play them for information flow and learning to occur; and so the students as well..." (RB12)

Academic staffs mediate between different levels of learning, i.e. classroom (student level), managerial, operational and top management levels. Academic staff operate at these levels depending on their ranks. For instance key players who are academia get in touch with all levels on frequent basis and therefore get to process information at these levels too. The non-academic staff operate across different directorates and units. Most times some phases of information processing are undertaken by this wing especially the dissemination phase. It is only when information is distributed that it becomes available for organisational use, otherwise it resides strictly at the individual level (Fiol and Lyle, 1986); so through the administrative staff, learning and information processing is facilitated. Finally, students are considered very important mechanisms because they are not only engaged in classroom education in Case Beta but they are utilised as forums for learning. They mediate between classroom learning, field practice, and research activities, which entail the acquisition, dissemination, interpretation and documentation of information and knowledge. In addition, students direct and guide lines of actions of the university based on their findings. To this, a student explains:

"We don't only research to acquire knowledge, we share the knowledge with our fellow students, staff, in fact everybody in the university...sometimes the VC gives us the go ahead to direct the way forward..." (RB10)

Students direct the steps for putting to practice learning and acquired knowledge under the supervision and monitoring by an assigned committee. From a broader and encompassing view, a respondent capture both organisational members and external parties as mechanisms of learning. By this, the respondent acclaimed:

"The university encourages its members to go into inter-disciplinary research so people across different departments and faculties collaborate/interact in order to carry out research. After such researches are carried out, the reports are presented to the school, the community and so on. Also we try to partner with other systems as well and that is a form of security for us because when we involve the immediate community in our research next time when we encounter problems they help proffer solutions so the school learns a lot by involving the community and in fact there is full participation. The researchers are learning as well as the university through external parties as well who come in to present findings and provide insights on the development of the system so we get to learn and adapt to it as it comes." (RB13)

On a different note, Case Cairo being a small-sized university as compared to Cases Alpha and Beta enjoy certain advantages through its organisational members as both

mediating and support OLMs. Each level of the university is as important as the other and all levels are responsible for the learning in the organisation.

“Each and every one found here is responsible for learning. It is not a one man’s function but everybody’s...” (RC5)

Organisational members’ process information on behalf of the university in and through their various forums and it is only when the knowledge is communicated that others tap from- this is usually done at town hall meetings and through other media. While information is processed at different levels, the classroom offers the opportunity for students and academic staff to relate and learn mutually. From this relationship, both staff and students get to share their experiences with their colleagues and tap for individual consumption as acclaimed by a respondent above (emphasized). Interacting at club and societies levels keeps in touch staff (academic and non-academic) and students who contribute and process information relevant to the university. It is therefore obvious that all organisational members play key roles and serve as learning mechanisms of the university that drives organisational learning.

- b. Paper-based and electronic mechanisms:** These mediating mechanisms support phases of information processing in the university. Electronically, information is acquired from diverse sources through online access. This information is disseminated and stored on the university website, portal and on pen drives as backups. Electronic mechanisms include the internet facilities and structures, intranet system, public media.

“The university has an official website so you can access information about certain things on the university, at the individual level you could email to send across information and occasionally we use memos too so there are varied ways we share information the social media is there too but that is quite restrictive based on individual perception” (RA12).

“Now that the university is on web, we just browse to obtain information, and we disseminate information through the portal...so we use the internet as an avenue for information management. We use the intranet communication system also to exchange information...” (RB2)

“The internet is an ally without which I don’t think I will be able to do my job as much as I am doing now with it. So there are resources which we are affiliated to which we tap into as staff and students. For us also there are forums we get to post things and get things off and interact with other scholars....” (RC1)

Manual mechanisms are also put to use in the acquisition of information from sources like the library and other hard copy materials. Information acquired from these sources are either distributed electronically or manually using posters, memos, magazines, departmental journals, information boxes, notice boards and also the clerical officers. In

addition, disseminated and interpreted information is stored manually using the filing cabinet, for future reference and use.

"We have means of disseminating information so as not to restrict the flow. So far so good within the university there are memos sent out. We have the clerical officers who despatch them to various offices and departments." (RB4).

"Through the radio channel (station) of the university, we have the internal media also, we have about three print media- the memos, the university bulletin and the advancement magazine those are all channels most especially the memos, newsletter goes round, the publisher comes to my office to drop my own copy so it's a community service medium" (RA4).

"Through the internet-emails- we paste it on notice boards of each block so you get to see it everywhere and certain boards are made close to offices for easy access..." (RC3).

Most of the electronic and paper-based mechanisms were viewed during the observations. For instance, the researcher witnessed the passing of files, share of information from one office to another with written and documented evidence in all three universities. Additionally, other mechanisms seen and viewed in the universities include journals, memo, bulletins, and filing cabinets/rooms.

- c. **Resources:** all three universities identified that the availability of resources enable their learning process. The human resources of the universities are the dominant- consisting of students and staff- who are qualified and contribute their efforts to the university's learning and service. They are found at every level and they interact between the learning processes for the organisation to learn. In fact, information processing in these universities becomes impossible without these mechanisms; they are fundamental. These resources are both specialised and non-specialised and they organise, control and operate other forms of learning mechanisms for organisational learning to occur. These respondents stress:

"This University generally learns from the individuals and groups in the system" (RA16)

"We have requirements...for you to be here you must meet the requirements, no two ways about it." (RC9)

In addition to human resources identified, it is also obvious that financial, tangible and intangible resources are support mechanisms that facilitate organisational learning. Financial resource was highly mentioned. This is because respondents believe financial resources support any intention and activities of learning.

"Money is needed for everything to work in a system what more of a university. We need money to gather relevant information, to get it shared through the available channels, through prints; also

money is required for researching and even publishing these intellectual properties of the university..." (RB6)

Yet, a respondent in Case Alpha explained it:

"Beside the dedication and effort, the cost involved in the use of these mechanism, I will say is substantial because aside the implementation, constant usage of the mechanisms requires funds so we always plan towards that and learning materials" (RA4)

In Case Cairo, financial resource is sourced by top management and staff who sort for grants to develop their capabilities and the organisation through the research and projects they undertake.

"Learning happens also because of the funds and research grants gotten by staff" (RC1)

Furthermore, respondents argued that the availability of financial resources without other supporting tangible resources like equipment, machines, technological tool; and intangible resources such as time, effort and contributions makes it impossible for learning to occur. Learning in these universities involves devotion and commitment as captured in the words of respondents:

"Eating and playing are easy and no one needs to be guided. But learning is different. Sometimes we learn without intending to. But in a community like ours, learning is intentional; learning is our way of life, so we have to give in to learn. You have to be willing to learn to be here because to survive we have to learn all the time." (RB13)

"It's not all about having mechanisms but the ability and responsibility of ensuring that these mechanisms are actually functioning. For instance I represent the students so the media I use in communicating or for information and knowledge exchange is fluid but it could be difficult at times but I have committed myself to making it work" (RA13)

Organisational members however stress that having a good blend of resources supports the process of learning in the university. To this end, each form of resource is dependent on the other and the non-availability of any can hamper learning (Osibanjo and Adeniji 2013; Yin-nor 2015):

"Aside the funds needed for communicating and sharing what one knows, time, machine and human efforts are all required for it to work, for learning to happen" (RA3).

However, a respondent in Case Beta, argued differently,

"Because the University has a mandate to learn even in the midst of insufficient fund, members of this university resolve in sacrificing a lot for the university to learn. So whether the funds are enough or not as long as we receive them on time we do our best to maximize it. What I am saying is that we learn through thick and thin." (RB6)

On general terms, the following constitute the mediation and support OLMs found in universities though utilised differently. Some of which are other forms of OLMs but

either mediate or support the process of learning in the universities. In essence, different forms of OLMs perform different functions as it relates to information processing and learning. Information obtained from different sources is shared across the university through informal and formal support/mediation OLMs (ways of communication). Official hierarchy of the university is commonly used in information dissemination, but other responsible departments and individuals are involved in the function. These mechanisms include:

1. Emails, Memos and circulars: it is the widely used for communication of learning opportunities or changes to be made in the system
2. Bulletins and Magazines: are more advanced than the Memos and used for publications of experiences, outcomes of research and new developments concerning the institutions.
3. Meetings, workshops and seminars: they are held on weekly, monthly, quarterly or bi-annual basis. For organisational learning, they are forums for acquisition, dissemination and interpretation of information. In addition, through these forums, identified institutional problems are discussed and corrective strategies formed; modification of organisational activities and structure becomes evident after communicating through these forums.
4. University website and hard filling: these are used to share, store and update organisational knowledge and any changes made in the system.
5. In-house trainings: they are officially organized to develop human resources from time to time.
6. Direct interaction-Discourses, gossips and cliques: are easily used in learning from research and experiences especially from different departments/levels
7. Classroom and associations/unions: with no discrimination, they are used to share ideas and experience unique insights among peers or between students and lecturers.

8. Organisational members: they serve as the voice of the university and transmit official and informal information of the university to other components and departments.
9. Notice boards and Electronic boards: they are used to display open information and can be accessed by external persons.

5.3 DISCUSSION ON ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING MECHANISMS

The definition of OLMs as mechanisms, forums, entities, channels, systems, processes, tools or approaches is best understood by universities as what it is accepted to be and its use in facilitating information processing, from the individual to organisational level-organisational learning. Similar to the work of Edmondson and Moingeon (1998); Lipshitz and Popper (1998); Kal-Unluoglu and Easterby-Smith (2013) organisational members operate OLMs, with some mechanisms designated for individual learning. These mechanisms also relate and disseminate the learning from individual level to an organisational level, reflecting what Lipshitz and Popper (1998: 196) and York and Sauquet (2003) refer to as “learning in organisation” and “learning by organisations”. Lipshitz and Popper’s (1996:1998:2000:20002) classification of OLMs has been found useful in investigating the OLMs operated in Case Universities. Furthermore, York and Sauquet’s (2003: 15) idea that OLMs are manifested or vary in distinct cultural settings signifies an empirical question, which indicates that OLMs are unique and specific to organisations, although some are universally applicable.

5.3.1 INTEGRATED OLMS

Based on research finding and the description of Golembiewski (2000), integrated OLMs are formal structures from initiation to implementation. In these universities, finding shows that some integrated OLMs are informally initiated but become institutionalized and widely accepted over time, similar to the argument of Lipshitz et al (2007) that integrated OLMs can be both informal and formal. The key difference between formalised mechanisms (like classroom education, meetings, in-house trainings, Students quizzes) and informal mechanisms (like Pally and town hall meeting) is that they are operated away from routine and not interwoven with task performance, whereas formal mechanisms like classroom education is a core function and mission of

the university. One interesting distinction arising from findings is that student club/quiz as a formal mechanism is also operated away from routine and task performance but it is a relevant structure for learning. This finding is however different from Lipshitz et al (2002:83) claim that integrated mechanisms are often operated in conjunction with task performance and one of the difficult form of OLMs to operate, but this is rarely the case in research universities because it has become more of their culture than a one-time occurrence.

Operating Pally and town hall meeting enables reflection and brainstorming like other structures while for student quizzes it is two-fold. Operators/clients brainstorm and reflect before the quiz, while during the operation of this mechanism, brainstorming and consultation does occur amongst group members over an assigned period, but reflection is hardly the case, unless done after the whole event or done by audience in participation (present) who are permitted to contribute and not by clients and operators. As argued by Clayphan et al (2013:2) that individuals reflect on their actions, performance, and those of their group after brainstorming session through the “value of open learner models”.

Classroom education, meetings, in-house trainings are formal and internal mechanisms and learning does occur during and after event/utilization of these mechanisms. Pally is an informal and internal mechanism and learning occurs in the same pattern as those above. On the contrary, student quizzes though formal and internal, learning here starts from when the school is notified of upcoming quizzes. This is because notification covers the areas of concentration, so information is collated and processed before the event. Also during the event, learning occurs between group participants, audience and the panel. Therefore, learning here is both proactive and reactive as opposed reactive learning done using other integrated OLMs.

5.3.2. NON-INTEGRATED OLMs

Similar to the findings of Drach-Zahavy and Pud (2010); Popper and Lipshitz (1998:171) this research acknowledges that non-integrated OLMs are operated by both particular units and special staff-top management- but they are also operated by other staff in these universities in processing information for organisational operation. In

Case Alpha for instance, directorates (as special units) operate as non-integrated mechanisms with no switch in function, while visitation and consultation is constantly undertaken by specific staff across different levels subject to institutional rotation, and not necessarily by top management. On the contrary, only key players operate Case Beta's visitation and consultation and special unit heads as argued by Lipshitz et al (2007) operate directorates. Furthermore, non-integrated OLMs are operated in these universities by different hierarchical levels (top management to student level) in processing information on behalf of the system. Some of which involve relating with members across different levels to operate while some are solely operated on individual levels. Good examples of the former found in the universities are the committee system, external training/developmental programs, joint research and external competition/quizzes- where selected members operate as representatives of these universities in processing information (learning). For the latter, students through the SIWES program and board meeting found in Case Cairo process information on behalf and for the betterment of the university. This finding is therefore inconsistent with those of Popper and Lipshitz (1998:2000), Drach-Zahavy and Pud (2010), Lipshitz et al (2007).

In addition, the committee system found in Cases Alpha and Beta are defined as **Multi-purpose OLM** because of the unique features; possessing the features of all forms of OLMs. Similarly, training can be defined as **supervisory OLMs**, only when cross training of externally acquired knowledge occurs. This is because selected staff attend external trainings; in essence they are operated by these staff on behalf of the university making it non-integrated. When these staff organise and operate in-house/departmental trainings to cross-train other staff it is then operated as an integrated mechanism; thus identifying external training as supervisory mechanism according to the definition of supervisory OLMs by Drach-Zahavy and Pud (2010); but in the absence of that, external trainings are strictly non-integrated OLMs

A contrary idea however arises toward Popper and Lipshitz's explanation that non-integrated OLMs are operated solely away from task performance. In these universities, non-integrated OLMs like the committee system, SIWES, External training, Board Meetings are truly operated by others on behalf of the whole system but they are considered as primary and interwoven functions and part of these universities which

cannot be excluded as external operations. In some cases, operations of these mechanisms are made compulsory for the university's learning –information processing- and attainment of its organisational objectives. Similar to the findings of Kar-Unluoglu and Easterby-Smith (2011) it is therefore arguable that structural definition of organisational learning (OLMs) tend to differ in mode of operation and clients under diverse context, environment and in different organisations depending on organisational objectives and makeup.

5.3.3 DESIGNATED OLMS

In all three Cases, unique designated OLMs are operated to facilitate organisational learning away from routines and usual tasks across different levels, within and outside the universities (Lipshitz et al 2007). Unions, associations and clubs are the similar and similar designated OLMs found in all Case Universities where learning takes place separately from task performance. In addition to these mechanisms, Cases Beta and Cairo operate similar offline mechanisms known as “pally” in Case Beta and “town hall meeting” in Case Cairo usually organised according to school calendar but at least twice a year to collect and process organisational information as a whole system. It is not a compulsory practice but organisational members are often encouraged to attend because it is a unique forum through which ideas are heard, knowledge exchanged and learning occurs across all hierarchical levels- from the top to the lowest level- at a snapshot. Similar to what Herndon (2006:10) describes as a peer review one *“generally said to encourage critical examination, promote the exchange of ideas, reduce non-academic interference, guide academic discourse, and reinforce academic values”*. Aside from these mechanisms serving as peer review, they promote “community of practice” permitting organisational members to err their views and concerns and share knowledge outside daily activities that enables learning in/of the organisation. As argued by Wenger and Snyder (2001: 139-140) that “community of practice” is used to describe people informally bound by shared expertise who share and exchange knowledge and learning beyond the traditional boundaries of their formal organisation for the purpose of awareness or approaching shared problems through a process of peer review. The only difference between the informal designated OLMs operated in Cases Beta and Cairo and the Peer review is that organisational members of these

universities are not compelled to attend and participate- participation is free will- as against peer review where members are compelled to participate (Herndon, 2006).

5.3.4 DUAL-PURPOSE OLMS

Most integrated and non-integrated OLMS found in research universities are associated with task performance and operated in line with achieving university's goals and objectives. Just that some of these mechanisms specifically allow for both learning and practice, i.e. learning by doing. According to Sankaran et al (2007) dual-purpose OLMS equates learning by doing and it is the most difficult to achieve in organisations. On the contrary, Dual-purpose OLMS are operated quite easily in university environments. Aleven and Koedinger (2002) in their research found that students who explain their steps during problem-solving practice with the use of a learning guide or demonstration learn with greater understanding than those without explanation. This finding is however synonymous with classroom education/setting as a dual –purpose OLMS found in Case Universities where different demonstrations, acts, practice and assessments are undertaken for learning purposes. In research universities, the lecturer and students operating this mechanism not only exchange information and knowledge but have the opportunity to express and practice this knowledge and learning to an extent through expressions, acceptable guides and other learning patterns. Lecturers operating this OLM are typical examples of “learning by doing” because they are putting their knowledge to practice and no two-class experiences are the same. In addition, students of certain departments like Education engage in compulsory teaching practice alongside their studies, while some are engaged in joint projects and research as well.

The committee system according to findings is considered a special dual-purpose OLM operated in and by the Government-owned universities (Cases Alpha and Beta). It is operated by members considered capable of achieving the aim of setting up a particular committee (for whatever issue or learning purpose). In committee systems, members process information and execute their findings and recommendation, or better still implement their conclusion as the case maybe, practically engaging them in learning from the start of the task as well as doing for the task to be considered completed. It is not only about processing information but about also putting acquired knowledge to

use. In this case, the committee system can be argued as a special forum or OLM because:

- i. It portrays the features of an integrated OLM because its operation is designed and run by same clients although constitutionally recognised as formed by the senate or council (Ogbogu, 2013).
- ii. Selected members operate committee systems or special individuals depending on universities to process information (learn) on behalf of the organisation. This is a key feature of non-integrated OLM.
- iii. Some functions of this mechanism can be carried out away and in conjunction with task performance, enabling both learning by doing and learning separately from one's function; therefore, exhibiting the features of both Dual-purpose and designated OLMs. For the above reasons, "committee systems" reflect **supervisory OLMs** (both features of integrated and non-integrated OLMs) and should not be limited to the definition of **dual-purpose OLMs** but "**Multi-purpose OLMs**" operated uniquely under different conditions as mechanism for organisational learning.

5.3.5 SUPPORT OLMs

In addition to Popper and Lipshitz's classification of OLMs, research findings identify some unique OLMs existing in research universities. They are primarily designed and operated as support mechanisms to facilitate the learning process of the university. These mechanisms are labelled as "support OLMs", made up of both human and non-human attributes. Organisational members especially lecturers have been identified as the common support mechanisms that relate the learning of different levels across the organisation and they also operate other primary and secondary mechanisms and undertake the learning in the organisation. In essence, organisational members offer supporting functions as learning mechanisms. Similarly, Husman (2001) refers to employees as 'contact points' of organisations because they act as communication structures that disperse learning and knowledge throughout the organisation aside other non-human points.

While manual and electronic media are considered as information distribution tools (Dixon 1992; Holt et al 2013; Levitt 2012), Case universities acknowledged them beyond that considering them as support mechanisms that connect the learning of one organisational level to another and also supports learning across the universities. For clarification, through manual (notice boards, journals, newsletters) and electronic (internet) means information is processed. Also, through the use of hard and soft mechanisms (documentations, publications, the library and online forum, learning of students and other organisational members), learning is access by all members of the universities. These mechanisms are also used to store knowledge and learning that can be exploited and explored constantly and in the future by existing and potential organisational members and external parties for learning purposes. This form of OLMs is operated by organisational members- the superior mechanism.

Interestingly, resources are tagged as support mechanisms that enable the operations of other OLMs: thus enabling organisational learning. Same with the findings of Jiang et al (2007) and Sirmon et al (2007), this research found that, resources as mechanisms are expected to have a striking balance for learning to occur because the unavailability of one form of resource against another is likely to distort the learning process and the operations of other OLMs. But again, it was revealed in research universities that the lack of resource provision does not hinder learning in the university as other available and limited resources are pulled together to enable learning that likely leads to the production of more resources. This means that resources operate as mechanisms for organisational learning and learning leads to the creation of other resources as argued by Smith et al (1996) that the availability and interaction of resources establishes the learning and performance of organisations. In addition, organisational learning creates and develops knowledge and knowledge is an important intangible resource for any organisation (Tippins and Sohi, 2003).

On concluding note, findings show that the key reasons for the design, operation and utilization of OLMs stem from the nature and working environment of Case Organisations. That is, universities are bureaucratic and special systems with OLMs designed uniquely to suit their learning, this is mostly different from those of everyday organisations- and the operation of certain OLMs are clear reflection of the organisation's hard culture and core parts that are irreplaceable. Other obtained

reasons for use include the fact that it facilitates organisational learning, the flare for melange. The table below highlights the interpreted similarities and differences in the context of this study:

Table 5.2 Comparison of the present empirical study and extant literature on OLMs

Organisational learning mechanisms	Extant Literature Similarities	This study's findings
Integrated OLMs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These mechanisms are designed and utilised by same client. • These mechanisms are both formal and informal. • These mechanisms are interwoven with task performance (Popper & Lipshitz 1998:2000; Schechter & Atarchi 2012; Lipshitz et al 2007; Golembiewski 2000; Kar-Unluoglu and Easterby-Smith 2011; Schechter & Feldman 2010, Schechter & Asher 2012) 	<p>Some learning mechanisms identified in case universities like Pally, town hall meeting and student quizzes reflect features of integrated OLMs that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are designed and utilised by same clients; • They are both formal and informal in operation, but they are not interwoven with task performance and not as argued by most studies that they are interwoven with task performance.
Non-Integrated OLMs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are used by different clients on behalf of their organisation. • Operated by special units and individuals- the top management- of selected universities • Are utilised away from task performance. (Popper and Lipshitz, 1998:2000; Lipshitz et al 2007; Schechter & Feldman 2010, Schechter & Asher 2012; Drach-Zahavy and Pud 2010; Kar-Unluoglu and Easterby-Smith 2011) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In selected universities, certain Non-integrated OLMs are utilised by members from different levels and not specially by "top management" as argued by Popper and Lipshitz that non-integrated OLMs are utilised by special staff-top management. • It was also found that staff who utilise non-integrated OLMs in case universities are subject to rotation or not depending on university. For instance, the directorates as part of their daily functions operate as

		<p>non-integrated OLMs- that is they process information on-behalf of the university. While, organisational members that consult with other universities tend to be rotated and different universities are visited as well.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additionally, some non-integrated OLMs (committee system, SIWES, external training, board meeting) are utilised in conjunction with task performance or primary function of the universities and not away from task performance as argued by Literature.
Dual-Purpose OLMs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These mechanisms are used in line with routines and achieving organisational objectives. And mostly indistinguishable from everyday work functions/practices. • These mechanisms provide the avenue for both learning and practice (Aleven and Koedinger, 2002; Popper and Lipshitz, 1998:2000; Lipshitz et al 2007; Sankaran el 2007) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all dual-purpose OLMs provide the avenue for learning by doing i.e. learning and practice considering the research cases. In essence, learning could occur solely with or without practice. • Furthermore, some mechanisms in these universities are utilised beyond dual-purpose because they exhibit features beyond “dual” to “multi” operations and are thus recognised as “multi-purpose mechanisms”. Examples of multi-purpose OLMs are the committees (academic board, student welfare) found in Case universities.
Designated OLMs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are utilised away from daily functions. In essence, arrangements are made to operate this form of mechanisms (Popper and Lipshitz, 1998:2000; Lipshitz et 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These mechanisms are similar to peer-review but tend to differ, as it is not operated based on compulsion but free will. Additionally, the use of these mechanisms foster

	al 2007)	“community of practice” in case universities
Supervisory OLMs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These mechanisms reflect both features of integrated and non-integrated OLMs. That is, they are designed and used by same client making them integrated OLMs and, • They are mainly utilised by special staff on behalf of the organisation; thus reflecting the feature of non-integrated OLMs (Drach-Zahavy and Pud, 2010) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These mechanisms are limited in use. Examples of such mechanisms in case universities include; classroom meetings, committee system, cross-training.
Patchy OLMs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These are less structured mechanisms that facilitate limited knowledge/information dissemination and interpretation (Drach-Zahavy and Pud, 2010) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This type of mechanism was not in use in Case universities.
Multi-purpose OLMs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arising from this research as mechanisms with different functions and features as explained above. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are established due to special features and structures of Case universities.
Support OLMs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arising from this research as mechanisms that link learning from different organisational levels and processes. They are mechanisms that also support the operations of other mechanisms for learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are utilised beyond information distribution tools and agents to learning mechanisms.

CHAPTER SIX

CROSS-CASES DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS II

6.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is a continuation of the research analysis. This chapter analyses questions on elements shaping OL, following similar analytical patterns with chapter five. Elements shaping OL in case universities are classified into environmental and organizational elements and are further categorised into sub-themes. How these elements either foster or impede learning in case universities are presented and further compared with the literature for discussion in attempt to outline the research findings. Next, the chapter draws conclusion on OLMs and elements shaping OL in case universities as complementary attributes in understanding the process of OL. Finally, the frame of reference was revisited in this chapter, incorporating OLMs and elements shaping OL and highlighting the links between them.

6.1 ENVIRONMENTAL INSTITUTIONS

6.1.1 REGULATIVE ELEMENTS

- A. Government policies, laws and regulations on Higher Education:** from previous studies on national policies for Higher Education in Nigeria (Saint et al., 2003; Teferra and Altbach, 2004), it was concluded that few structured relationships exist between universities learning and higher education policies as developed at the national level. Higher education policies are made to guide the strategic aim of universities- the acquisition, development and inculcation of proper orientation value system and relevant skills; for dissemination and use for individual, organisational and societal benefits (FGN, 2004). The policy on Higher Education in Nigeria is based on what the government permits as accepted practices and activities; or what the incumbent Government legislates within the goal of universities. This study identifies that economic and political rationales define HE policies, both at national and institutional levels. In general, the Nigerian Policy on Higher Education analyses concerns associated with policy update and suitability for both Public and private universities but these policies affect universities differently. In Case Alpha, Government policies shaping their

operations and learning stems from the Federal level. For Case Beta, Government policies arise from the Federal and State Government. This is because the Federal Government according to the Nigerian constitution is responsible for overseeing and governing public universities in the country. To this end, the Federal Government through its parastatals influence and interfere with the operations of Case Beta as a public university. The State Government on the other hand under the constitution is responsible for the funding and administration of State established universities. While, Case Cairo as a private university is expected to adhere to the Federal Government policies regarding establishing a private university. In essence it must fulfil private university ownership requirements before being offered the document of operation by NUC and also before getting accredited. Case Cairo is also monitored by NUC on constant basis.

Several Higher Education policies influence the process of organisational learning in these universities. The commonly identified development and policies are on universities funding arrangement and the governance and external control. For example, in cases of Government-owned institutions in Nigeria, the Federal and State Governments are responsible for the funding and provision of adequate resources for respective institutions. Financial resources are certainly part of the driving forces of organisational learning.

Institutional funding arrangement: Government's provision of funds to a large extent shapes the learning in universities. According to respondents, the availability of finance enables learning because the provision of sufficient funds enable the building of conducive learning environment- one with capable skills, learning materials and facilities (Zakaria and Daud, 2009); whereas inadequate funding distorts the learning process. Respondents explain:

"If the university has basic facilities and adequate funding then I doubt if any other thing can challenge learning in the system" (RA3)

"The major problem is funding that comes from the Government. Funding determines how far learning occurs or not..." (RB1)

Respondents expressed strong concern towards funding and resource availability. Financial resources are available but inadequate for learning in the institution, and this is as a result of high dependence on Government for funding:

“We wait on the government for almost everything...and because of the challenges of resources at times there is a lag” (RA11)

While it was further stressed in Case Beta that State Government thrives to fund the university as at when due and in moments of delay, the Government explains the reason for such delay:

“...funding comes to us from the Government as at when due. But once awhile we experience delays, which the authority explains to us on behalf of the Government why this is so...” (RB4)

Although some interviewees frown at the funding arrangement in Case Beta, explaining that their entire operations, learning activities rely on State Government funding; with the exception of research funds and partial training sponsorships provided by the Federal Government through parastatals like TET Fund. In such situation, learning becomes problematic when the Government fail to fund the University:

“The Government also stands as a barrier to learning in this university because institutions like this university are capital intensive right from the start and when Government fails to make provisions for the university; it definitely affects the learning in the system negatively ...” (RB5)

It appears that available resources hardly suffice to handle traditional tasks, and efforts to engage in extra learning activities would require additional resources. This general shortage of financial resources produces limiting effects on organisational learning. However, these universities recruit larger number of students as an important stream of alternative income. Additionally, it was obtained from Case Beta that State Government funding is subject to increment depending on certain factors like the amount of revenue generated by the State Government and also the ideology and appreciation of Education by the Government.

Governance and external control: policy on HE governance and control confers third parties like the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) and NUC the power to manage the affairs of universities in Nigeria externally (Scott, 2008). But this varies with institutions. External control as a regulative element can be a powerful contributor to organisational learning in universities-especially by providing legally guided basis for good practices and procedures relative to universities development. For instance highly legislated programs, such as the compulsory human resource development, students’ practical scheme stand as sources and mechanisms of organisational learning in the university, from which all components of the institution directly or indirectly benefit from. A key player in Case Alpha identified the relevance of this policy:

“Some of these policies are beneficial...we sometimes need to be strictly governed for things to function” (RA1)

Respondents in Case Beta however made clear the role of NUC in their learning; they explained that the parastatal outlines learning targets and expectations for Government universities with timeframe to undertake and absorb learning lessons into the system. But NUC also contributes towards the university’s learning.

“NUC from time to time expects us to do things or learn in a defined way...they also provide support for such instructions. For example, NUC made e-learning compulsory for all universities, giving five years to meet the minimum requirement. But some universities had it in operation before then...” (RB7)

The Federal Government however exerts control which could either shape organisational learning of universities favourably or unfavourably. On a positive note, organisational learning undertaken by the instruction of NUC/Federal Government is often provided for by the Government in terms of sponsorship, trainings, materials, management and monitoring of the implementation stage.

“NUC offers sponsorship to university staff for trainings, provides learning materials; while for students they offer them scholarships...” (RB9)

“The University also finds itself learning from the contributions of regulatory bodies such as NUC who provides certain inputs into the system... we had a situation of NUC introducing an examination software into the system...we didn’t budget for that...aside the software expert training selected representatives, we found ourselves acquainted with the software... today we all learn and teach each other how to work with it” (RA3)

On the State level, the Government through the State Ministry of Education governs and manages Case Beta. In essence, the funding and provision of learning facilities and amenities by the State Government determines to a large extent whether organisational learning in this university is shaped positively or negatively. Respondents emphasized that the State Government grants them more autonomy to operate as compared to the Federal Government and this promotes learning. Also the State Government dedicates to the further training of staff abroad according to “a local Government agreement” on yearly basis, thereby influencing learning positively:

“Each year one staff from every local Government is sent abroad for PhD under the sponsorship of the State Government... the university has memorandum of understandings with universities in UK, South Africa, Asia...” (RB13)

“Government bought into it the idea of sending both academic and non-academic staff for further training abroad. This creates the motivation to learn...” (RB7)

Conversely, respondents acknowledged that the high level of control exercised by NUC deters learning and curtails their autonomy to operate. This is because the dictation of what or what should not be done limits individual and organisational capacities to learn effectively, as the university tends to learn based on directives given by Government parastatals in control. To this end, respondents from Cases Alpha and Beta present:

“...Government has a large stake in our university and because of that their directives determine how we learn... it interferes and affects learning...” (RA10)

“The control of universities by the NUC should be relaxed to enable universities exercise full autonomy with regards their learning and activities...” (RB3)

However, a respondent in Case Alpha highlighted that Government policy regarding control and governance is changing:

“Unlike before, schools can now develop courses for approval by NUC... it was basically NUC’s function” (RA8).

It was also gathered from Case Beta that the political interference of the State Government limits learning because the VC of this University is appointed by the Governor. Some Government appoint VCs for personal interest and not for the actual good of the university, thereby hampering the learning in the university. A respondent recalled a situation where the political influence of the Government led to a drastic effect on their operation and thus learning:

“Because of some political misunderstanding that occurred between the VC and Government, the university’s operation was put to halt for few months and it affected the running of the university... till it was resolved” (RB6)

From a different point of view, Case Cairo is governed by the Board of Trustees, made up of seven external and two internal members (Case Cairo website); with mainly external control. Different from Cases Alpha and Beta, the governance of this university is not in the hands of the Federal or State Government but in the hands of the Board of Trustees (individual members) that make policies on the operations and activities of Case Cairo. In essence, the board also shapes the learning in the university. To this end, a respondent stated that the board plays a critical role in the learning activities of the university and the university is where it is because of their decision:

“As you know we are governed by a board, what the board says holds. Though staff and students make inputs at any given opportunity...but I must say, the university is moving because of the board. What we do, learn and how the system is, is all because of these people...just as the saying goes, the state of a business reflects the owner of such business.” (RC8)

Besides being governed by the Board, Case Cairo is externally interfered with by NUC on certain aspects of operation. NUC accredits programs and monitors issues like quality assurance of the university but does not establish the programs and curriculum as it does in Case Alpha. Because NUC monitors quality assurance of Case Cairo, the university is expected to meet the requirements as outlined by NUC in order to get full accreditation (Ogbogu, 2013). Meeting these requirements influences Case Cairo to carry out necessary number of research (that is a requirement), through which the university gets to learn from. With regards regulative elements, a Government parastatal office was seen in Case Beta. Where Government directives in relation to learning and operations are displayed on the notice board and documents sent across to all schools for implementation- the researcher came across a training demand sent by the State Government ministry of Education (Case Beta) demanding that all staff be trained on a new software to be introduced in the school, and staff were expected to register for attendance.

B. Trade Union actions: trade unions exert influence on public universities-Cases Alpha and Beta. Trade union decisions and actions influence the learning in these universities. In struggle for universities autonomy, welfare and development, principal officers of trade unions like ASUU- the most prominent university union in Nigeria- make harsh decisions that tempers with the learning and operations of member institutions.

“...ASUU promotes and limits learning, but the negative actions are higher” (RA14)

“The labour issue is the major barrier to learning when government fail to tackle certain issues and the union declares strike...” (RB12)

It is often agreed upon that member institutions adhere to these decisions and instructions in order to provoke the Government into fulfilling their obligations. ASUU mediates between Government and public institutions by ensuring that the Government undertakes its designated functions and responsibilities with regards universities. To this end, the fervent pursuit of the union makes it possible for universities to be provided with learning structures (like equipped training centres), facilities and financial allocations at the appropriate time: thus promoting the learning and development in universities-as this is the union’s sole aim of existence. On the contrary, drastic effects of Government’s non-compliance with the demands of the union, often results in industrial actions such as long-term strikes and closure of school activities.

These actions in turn halt and interfere with the learning process as well as the activities of the university (Philip, 2013).

"ASUU's efforts and actions have helped the lives of most universities like ours...but you know they are always hitches to us as a university...our learning is interrupted..." (RB11)

6.1.2 NORMATIVE ELEMENTS

Selected universities maintain a number of relational systems based on normative expectations. Unlike the regulative systems which involve explicit governance and power systems, normative systems signify a sense of duty and responsibility associated with authority. These responsibilities and activities are not undertaken as a result of compulsion but as a sense of duty for the betterment of the universities and also in line with the norms of the society (Licht 2008; Sandhu 2009). Certain attribute/structures were identified and observed as indications of normative elements. These include union quarter and signboards in the Government owned universities; while for Case Cairo, the club arena was visited and their activities are found on the university website.

- A. Collaboration with sister institutions:** Cases Alpha and Beta are found to engage and collaborate with similar universities, other HEIs or the private sector as normative responsibilities and duties out of common good. In essence, external collaborations are maintained out of the duty for common interest, thereby superseding individual interests.

"...Our interaction with these universities is a common practice and it fosters learning" (RA3)

Unlike Case Alpha, this university (Case Beta) not only collaborates with sister institutions (State Universities) but with Federal universities and other Further Education Institutions like technical schools, in order to learn, replicate good practices observed in other HEIs into the system where appropriate.

"These key staff visit and consult not only with other state universities, but Federal, technical and polytechnics as well." (RB7)

It was also found that Case Beta operates a public private partnership (PPP) scheme:

"This University is in partnership with a number of private firms...this partnership promotes the learning in the university..." (RB4). A scheme where Government universities relate and collaborate with private organisations as a key mechanism to improve the quality and learning in universities, and a driver of development (Wards et al., 2006). Respondents

identified that partnering with private organisations is not a law or policy to adhere to but a common practice undertaken by most universities in Nigeria depending on the agreement of partners. They further stated that because of partnership with private organisations, students are able to get easy entry access to undertake their practical trainings (SIWES) through which Case Beta learns. In addition, partnering with private organisations enables the organisations act socially responsible towards the university by building laboratories, more classes and structures, providing learning facilities and technological tools. It was also revealed that since the commencement of the partnership scheme, learning has been fostered believing also that each partner contributes and fulfils their quota of the agreement.

“Our university like other universities partner with banks, communication organisations etc. for their own good. It’s a two way relationship. We learn from them, our students learn from them while on IT. They also provide funding and facilities for the university. While we offer our services and support on their demand...” (RB5)

In turn, the partnering organisations approach Case Beta with research proposals and grants to carry out research on behalf of the organisations according to their needs-to proffer solutions or identify causes- thereby enabling learning. These organisations also consult the university to offer them assistance (usually in the capacity of human resources and promotional activities) in large scale functions.

“Staff and students engage in programs for organisations like X and other non-governmental organisations. In particular, the university research for organisations and they provide funding...” (RB8)

Institutional collaboration is therefore an influential normative element that fosters learning in the university. By building and promoting alliances with similar and other institutions, the university is able to tap relevant information and other resources from these institutions for its learning and other traditional activities and vice versa. This practice according to respondents is mutual and often beneficial to all institutions involved. It was further ascertained that aside consulting with other HEIs and reporting back to universities, partnering institutions (visited institutions) also send reports to these universities capturing matters consulted upon and vice versa.

“Relating with other educational institutions aids learning...after every visit and deliberations the university receives reports from the institution(s) and we do same as a form of documentation...” (RB1)

A respondent in Case Alpha made mention of constraints impeding collaborative activities, mostly shaped by contextual and locational traditions. Collaborative activities do occur with institutions found in heavily accustomed communities, but university representatives adhere to such traditions in the course of assignments. However, despite the challenge, the university devices means of adapting in order not to hamper its learning.

"Few members of staff are unwilling to undertake assignments in...because of their heavy communal traditions...but we still do." (RA14)

B. Competition: Competition found in public universities is different from that occurring in the private university. Research grants are often provided to higher education institutions in Nigeria by the Education Trust Fund on annual basis and public universities are expected to compete on that basis to win grants because funds are insufficient:

"...It is also competitive to win research grants at the local and international level" (RA5)

"Universities get grants on the basis of research relevance and impact...the more our research is beneficial to the society the more funds we get"(RB13)

Grants are sourced locally and internationally. Research grants are won on basis of previous research outcomes, number of publications and possible research contributions. Comprehensive proposals are submitted to sponsors for scrutiny, before a consideration is made. Respondents stressed that the ability of the university to compete for grants enables its learning activities. The participating process itself is a form of learning and winning grants encourages the university to undertake wider scope research that promotes its learning and that of the society. Although respondents explained that in the absence of grants, they undertake research according to available resources. However, by competing for grants, learning is encouraged. In Cases Alpha and Beta, students also compete for admission as oppose the norm where service providers compete for customers/market. This is because; these universities are much more affordable and are therefore easily accessible by the public. Students therefore thrive to meet the universities requirements in order to get accepted.

"...students compete for space in the university" (RB12)

"Competition is stiff when it comes to admission in this university. student have to struggle to get slots" (RA8)

In Case Cairo, it is identified that the university competes with similar universities for students, unlike Cases Alpha and Beta where students compete to gain admission. In order to win students, Case Cairo learns in order to provide exceptional services and to build an edge over similar private universities (Appelbaum 2000; Moingeon and Edmondson 1996). This is so because it is understood that only few students access private universities as compared to public universities due to high costs of fee and so parents and students access private universities that provide outstanding services and worth spending the large sum. This university addresses its students as customers and learns the dynamics of satisfying customers as done in real private organisations:

“The students are considered as customers while education as the product where the students have to be kept satisfied before the staff are being considered and what I know is that educational institutions are meant to exist in perpetuity but in today’s financial world universities that do not look at itself as product ceases to exist (become solvent) because the funds and grants to sustain the universities are declining so universities have to struggle to sell their products in order to gain funds and this is absurd...” (RC1)

In essence, competition and the demand to secure students push the university to learn beyond its borders in order to pursue and source income, which encourages learning. But it can also hinder learning especially on the part of staff. Staff who consider that the management perceive students more important than them; and know they are only used to keep students satisfied and generate income for the university will be demotivated and contribute less towards the learning in the university knowing their perceived aim by the university as argued by a respondent:

“...our students are important but when they are treated as the only priority it reflects negatively on staff and that demotivates us to contribute or even learn as the case may be” (RC8)

- C. Labour congress membership/ Societies:** respondents acknowledged that belonging to the national labour congress (Nigeria Labour Congress) is an ideal and acceptable value system found not only among the civil service but also carried out by public universities. This normative function creates a sense of acceptance and belonging to the society. Members of participating trade unions are considered “the economy transition train” through which positive transformations to the society are made evident. For Cases Alpha and Beta, their unions-ASUU, NASU, and SSANU- are part of the Labour congress; that are geared towards promoting and developing universities and its capacities: thus contributing intellectually to the learning in the universities. Some extramural activities and certain processed information or acquired knowledge are

applicable to the university. According to Adeniji and Adekunjo (2010:1) union “serves as a platform for social interaction among members by organizing seminars, lectures, conferences and symposia. The union members learn.”

“Ethics affects OL. In line with the norms of most universities we are part of the labour union, we have other unions...during union congress and meetings we relate with members from far and wide...from meetings here we get to know what is happening...it’s all about learning...” (RB3)

“All Government universities are unionised. We represent our unions and the union represents the university as well by guiding and directing part of the university’s affairs and operations” (RA15)

By being members of the Labour congress directly and through unions, these universities are able to draw from ideas and knowledge of member universities who they are not in constant contact with, during national programmes. Internally, unions also thrive to keep their members abreast with favourable practices and conditions of other universities, and in the process universities become aware and learn. But in the presence of gaps in communication between the union and the university management or Government, the learning in the university is interrupted. This is because such gaps often results to militant actions that ends up interrupting the learning process.

“When there is a communication gap between union leaders and the members, or the union leaders and the management or the Government it definitely stands as a barrier to learning because it disrupts the free flow of communication between the members and the university. And this gap can be due to friction between the management and the union leaders I mean if there is no rapport between them especially when new changes come up and the members of the union are not satisfied with the changes you expect frictions to arise...” (RB12)

Student clubs and societies are operated in Case Cairo as a sheer normative value instituted by similar universities as an ideal practice, but tagged differently from Cases Alpha and Beta:

“Government universities have unions; we have clubs and societies...” (RC5)

These societies are used to build students intellectually, and socially and the university as a whole. For instance, the university operates a creative writing club that brings students and staff together to create an appreciation for art through writing: *“creative writing club provides support to both staff and students...who have an interest in writing (I. e short stories, lyrics and poetry)”* (Case Cairo Newsletter, 2015:2). Such societies foster learning of individuals and the university, through interaction, share of ideas and knowledge and collaboration to exhibit the potentials of the university. Therefore, trade unions are

informal sources of knowledge, mechanisms and they exert both encouraging and limiting influence on the learning in the university.

D. Community service: it was discovered that Case Alpha engages in community services as one of the values that reflects its mission and vision statement. The university mentors institutions like the institute of advanced research (IAR), teaching hospitals and many more with out-stationed branches through staff exchange and affiliations with non-governmental organisations and other institutions. Common services provided to distant communities are in relation to empowerment-teaching and learning-, research and in addition diagnostics and surveillance services in areas of environment, agriculture and medicine. Through the provision of community services, the university builds itself intellectually and enhance its learning. The university can learn diversely from affiliates, from the execution of the service itself, which could be applicable to both individuals and the university where necessary (Case Alpha Evaluation Report, 2012). Supporting the report, a respondent acknowledge that: “ *...the university also engages in outreach services in communities with other organisations*” (RA6)

E. Institutional autonomy: Case Cairo as a private university is free from the control and interference of Government in its business. The Government has no voice in how learning occurs in the university and so the funding as well. To this end, the operations and management of the university rest upon the Board of trustees and not the Government. This offers Case Cairo the freedom to utilize and develop its resources, its learning activities without Government control or limitation due to dependence on funds. The university also organises its program to reflect the societal needs unlike Case Alpha that waits upon NUC to recommend or introduce programs for adoption in the university. A respondent explained that autonomy means a lot when it comes to learning. Autonomy could either foster or inhibit the learning process of the university. To this the respondent said:

“The good thing about this university is that the Government has no say in the way we operate, only for meeting the required educational standard, which we are striving to. The university has the right to set its learning agenda, so today we are trying this tomorrow another... the danger still remains that when one is given too much freedom, most times it ends up being misused. Aside that...” (RC7)

Autonomy boosts the learning in the university when used to access learning properly and engaging in good practice that is considered applicable and relevant to the system

(Hanaki and Owan, 2013). On the contrary, misusing this opportunity will confer disastrous actions.

6.1.3 CULTURAL-COGNITIVE ELEMENTS

Cultural-cognitive elements arise as influences to organisational learning in aspects of individual dispositions and beliefs nurtured by locational differences, diversity and religion in some cases. These elements are often beyond individual control and possibly a way of existence (Shenkar 2002; Trevino et al 2008). Opportunities for and processes of organisational learning are powerfully shaped by elements such as cultural orientation, religion and historical links/symbols. Whether or not the universities work to develop learning processes and opportunities depends upon its overall mission and vision. Explaining the influence of cultural-cognitive element on learning, a respondent in Case Beta addressed this with recommendations on how this could be transformed to suit the university:

“What hampers our learning system is basically culture and religion which is tightly embraced by a lot of the people and it is taking control of us. People are still primitive because of culture but I tell you culture can also be modernised to reflect the 21st century and it will make us better people...” (RB1)

- A. Cultural background and orientation:** cultural orientation is clearly an important element shaping the learning in the university. Cultural beliefs drive the thinking, actions and behaviours of beings. The university constitutes of organisational members from different cultural groups-north, south, west and east-possessing strong and distinct cultural beliefs that do shape the process of organisational learning in the university.

“Imagine a school with people from nothing less than fifty cultural backgrounds...what can you say when it comes to learning?” (RA7)

Similarly, Case Cairo has organisational members from varying cultural backgrounds-across Africa, Asia and Europe- who uphold different beliefs.

“...has vibrant international staff; inspired teachers...” (Case Cairo Newsletter, 2015: i)

Unlike Cases Alpha and Beta, the cultural orientation of members of this university stems from the nation’s culture and cuts across external borders. While, in Case Beta, cultural diversity is on the low side as compared to Case Alpha because the admission

and selection of staff and students are done on indigenous basis; in essence qualified indigenes are considered first before others.

"...As a state university, most of our staff and students are indigenes...these staff and students are admitted based on qualifications not just because they are indigenes..." (RB9)

The effect of multi-cultural orientations on the process of organisational learning arises mainly in moments of attaining uniform interpretation of information. Every organisational member believes his or her ideas and meaning is superior and subject to adoption; therefore creating numerous bidding which often results to little or no acceptable interpretation and time wastage in the whole process of learning. This also results to conflict between organisational members. Information processing in a multi-cultural environment like Case Alpha gives rise to conflict of interest, because organisational members tend to process information in the best way that suits their cultural orientations and benefits; thus limiting learning in the university. Similar to the views of Lines et al (2011: 170) that *"beliefs are shared and, based on the interpretation of shared experiences, create additional barriers to learning because groups, the whole organisation and, in some cases, external stakeholders must change their beliefs before learning can occur."*

However, most organisational members of Case Beta share same cultural links and this makes communication easier and the understanding of certain traits and behaviour portrayed by these members. Low cultural diversity promotes learning because the issue of conflict tends to be minimal when it comes to processing information. Organisational members believe information processing by members of similar cultural background and orientation will suit and represent their views and the university which is surrounded and situated in the same culture. To this end, there is less disparity and conflicting ideas on the ground of culture as compared to Case Alpha.

"Cultural orientation also promotes learning. For example most members of this institution share similar cultures and that enables easy understanding when it comes to activities, functions and even learning. It is not because we think alike but because our beliefs are the same culturally so that reduces the big issues of diversity and all that. But it also has its limitations I must say..." (RB6)

Rather disparity in learning in Case Beta occurs due to similar cultural links. According to a respondent some organisational members effectively support information processing based on who presents the idea or information, thereby limiting

organisational learning. This is because these members share similar worldviews and a unified culture based on their attachment and shared perceptions (Earley and Mosakowski, 2000):

“the larger percentage of students and staff are natives and you find people clustering into tribal/local government groups sometimes people just take a stance against an idea irrespective of if it's going to benefit the whole system or not what they look at is the source of the information if the source of the information is from a particular group you try to support if not they decline not minding the right performance but base on parochial connections so those are some of the issues we face as setbacks.” (RB1)

From a completely different view, it was uniquely presented by a respondent in Case Cairo:

“Staff and students of this university are from different cultural roots, different religion, but the university tries its best in managing these differences...I will tell you how the university does that in a number of ways. Firstly, the university ensures we as individuals share similar objectives with the university, by doing that we know our cultural or whatever our beliefs are have to be discarded to embrace what we share. Secondly, every religion is been provided for [in terms of places of worship] and everyone is expected to respect each other's faith. Making mockery of one's faith here is a serious offence deserving disciplinary actions, so that doesn't happen. So when it comes to the learning process of the university, the management does not permit culture or religion to interfere. We thank XX we don't have fanatics here, everyone is civilised.” (RC6)

It was further gathered that the selection/recruitment criterion in Case Beta also limits the learning in the university to an extent because it taps available knowledge from organisational members of similar cultural beliefs and backgrounds without fully exploring other cultural orientations which could foster learning. In this light, learning is tempered with by delineating cultural orientations capable of contributing to the richness of learning and organisational knowledge because learning is all about diversity.

“Not having a full taste of other cultures here means learning is incomplete. Learning is all about variety” (RB6).

Similarly, it was argued in Case Alpha that the existence and management of diverse cultural orientations promotes rich methods, practices, ideologies in the process of organisational learning that is beneficial to all:

“Diversity also encourages learning because it creates more exposure, develops relationship and gives room for interaction and intertwining with people of different calibre, interest, characters, ideas, opinions and it strengthens people” (RA11)

In clarification, a respondent in Case Beta explained that the selection criterion is carried out not as a means of limiting people from different cultural backgrounds accessing the university but as a means of providing education to the immediate

community and State. The respondent further explained that this occurs because the Federal universities hardly accommodate indigenes of the State, rather external parties are granted high priority over home students; thus the formation of State Universities to accommodate such issues.

"This university was established to train minds and meet local needs. The State University is the best institution for indigenes to participate because the Federal university is a makeup of everybody making it even difficult for community members to access and the private university is expensive." (RB2)

It was also noted in Case Beta that declining cultural values of organisational members especially among students is a great limitation to the learning in the organisation because such organisational members are part of the learning process just to obtain fast results suitable to them and not to contribute or develop themselves and the organisation:

"...Cultural values are declining which in turn is affecting learning itself because people are more interested in obtaining results the fast way not learning to know and get developed but learning to just get results..." (RB13)

B. Religion: certain religious beliefs impact upon organisational learning in these universities. for instance, it was identified in Case Alpha that the existence of religious beliefs hinders learning:

"There are religious issues that hinder the full exploration of women potentials in this university" (RA3)

This is because Muslim women in the university in particular limit their participations in certain school and learning activities due to their religion. Interactions with colleagues and superiors are limited as well. These beliefs restrict the learning potentials of the university, because these women's capacities are not properly tapped and contributed to the system's learning. However, these beliefs are hardly interfered with by the university or the Government, but a respondent raised an interesting point towards mitigating this issue:

"We are starting programmes to help the religious stuck women get out of their shelves to engage in the real learning society so they can contribute to the system building" (RA1)

For Case Beta, the religious beliefs of its members include: Christianity, Islam and traditionalism. Respondents stressed that religion influences learning but this varies with individuals. For instance, organisational members who are traditionalists

undertake certain rituals that the university does not interfere with because it is their way of worship and representation:

"My religion differs from others and I know it tempers with some school activities but it is my belief...I try my best to cover up..." (RB4)

Yet another expressed:

"Members of the X religion do not mingle with single women of certain age and that affects learning because you cannot relate with them because you're not married..." (RB13)

Although a respondent confessed that they sometimes observe these religious practices to research on in order to learn. Organisational members go ahead to write journals and articles on these religions to create awareness.

"We have a lot of X members in this university and we are researching on them, they are the most famous traditional worshippers around here..." (RB7)

Some traditionalists open up in discussion with their colleagues to let them understand the religion and learn about their practices while some don't. It was also mentioned that Islam is on the high side in the university and that influences learning too.

"Aside the traditionalists, Muslims also have their rituals too. They operate considering religion it is good but I don't think in a school environment it isn't fair on others. Some decide to participate as it suits their beliefs..." (RB11)

Major cultural-cognitive issues associated to information processing in Case Beta are due to the highly decentralised nature of religion. Information is processed taking into consideration religious stance which might not be representative because of the diversity in religion. In some cases organisational members exclude themselves from participating in certain learning activities because of their religion, thereby hampering the learning in the organisation. In Case Cairo, religion just like culture is managed and not permitted to interfere with their learning:

"Individuals are free to practice their beliefs outside the school's activities not as it goes on..." (RC8)

It is therefore obvious the university has made it a point of duty to manage the cultural and religious orientations of organisational members so as to enable its learning and also to create a sense of acceptance to all organisational members. Establishing equal grounds for all is a stepping stone towards achieving organisational goals and fulfilling its mission and vision. From observation, religious trait tends to be common in all universities. All universities have religious centres provided of which most times

organisational members belonging to the Islam religion were seen observing their doctrine either in their office chambers while others in the religious centre. On Fridays, Muslims visit the central mosques for prayers in the afternoon (this is quite different from other days). During school period the mosques were always opened while the church only at certain times; reflecting that during the process of OL, Muslim organisational members had to be excused/absent to engage in their doctrine, while the process is halt or distorted.

- C. Historical Links:** According to respondents in Case Alpha, history does influence organisational learning. History to them determines how and why certain learning processes are carried out. Some aspects of the learning process changes while some remain same over years. For instance, information processing of this case study can be traced back to its historical links through its sole goal:

“To advance the frontiers of learning and break new grounds, through teaching, research and the dissemination of knowledge of the highest quality; to establish and foster national and international integration, development and the promotion of African traditions and cultures; to produce high-level human power and enhance capacity-building through retaining, in order to meet the needs and challenges of the catchment area, Nigeria and the rest of the world” (Alpha University website).

Historical links influences learning in the institution by presenting a defined process of learning for the system. This is a strategic point and that promote learning because organisational members become aware and conscious of these processes, even if not carried out explicitly in the same pattern. Historical links tend to limit learning in the university when the historically preserved symbols are enforced strictly without considering the “time factor”. Historical symbols do not serve and fit into all unconventional patterns. However, in relation to Case Alpha, its traditional and archaic learning activities and mechanisms still in use are historical symbols that limit the ease of information flow and learning, although they still serve the purpose of learning:

“I will say because of the traditional methods of doing things... it gets tough, but it is working for us. The university needs to drop some of its old and long lines ... and embrace a more streamline path that will be less vigorous when it comes to information processing” (RA14).

- D. Festivity:** it was found that festivities shape learning in Case Beta. Respondents demonstrated that aside the religious and national occasional break, the community is in the habit of celebrating festivals that interrupts the operations of the university. Some of these festivals are rituals undertaken and in order to avoid misunderstandings

and potential crises, the school usually closes down operations on notification of these activities. In such situations, learning activities are put to stop.

"The university closes down because of community activities such as their initiation rituals. I experienced it once. To avoid issues the university calls for break..." (RB13)

Because these festivals are not stable in occurrence, they are not captured in the university calendar. It was complained that due to non-capturing of festivals, lectures are usually rushed to meet up with timeline and targets. Timelines are met because students are usually given the course outlines and materials at the beginning of the semester and when the university faces such situations; students and staff carry out self-learning while on break to ease the learning on return.

"We also have festivity issues that affects our learning and the normal curriculum sometimes in the semester the VC calls for faculty meetings with unscheduled programs that are not really captured within the university calendar and that causes destabilization and at the end of the day activities and teachings are being rushed so some courses are not really covered but what gives most students the advantage is that they have the course outline at the beginning of the course which helps them study ahead of time." (RB5)

6.2 ORGANISATIONAL ELEMENTS

6.2.1 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Respondents of Case Alpha confirmed that the university is a public learning institution (university) as discussed by Ekong (2013) and accessible to people from different cultures and economic status. According to a respondent *"...diversity is what makes the university"* (RA6), and further explains that the culture of strong communal relationships found in the university manages the issues of **diversity** especially in the aspect of learning, as oppose the findings of Foldy (2003) who suggests that learning becomes difficult in the midst of diversity-heterogeneous teams. To this the key player expressed:

"We believe so much in relationships and this goes a long way in curtailing barriers that might surface when it relates to learning in universities" (RA6)

This informal nature of relationships is natural in the country (Nigeria is a collective system) and the culture is imbibed also in universities because they are perceived as more critical for organisational learning.

"We relate and interrelate a lot, so people don't keep to themselves...however this encourages learning" (RA13)

Case Beta is also a public university under the control of State Government as identified by respondents and presented in several sections of this analysis. The university has fewer organisational members from external cultural backgrounds and more of those with similar cultural links but with different dialects. But again the collective system of the country (Nigeria) and the informal nature of relationships curb the differences. Respondents acknowledged that relationship keeps and binds the university together, despite individual differences and attitudes. Communal relationship to them is what upholds the growth of the system, including its learning. This also promotes teamwork and collaborative efforts contributed by organisational members, similar to the findings of Carmeli et al (2009). In essence, communal relationship is a part and parcel of the university, in fact it is a culture built naturally in the system.

“Aside the cultural barriers, we operate as a community and the cordiality fosters learning between and amongst us because it breaks the communication barrier that stands against learning occurring in the system.” (RB1)

In Case Cairo, Respondents confirmed it is a private university considering its ownership and management. The university consist of both home and international organisational members who reflect its level and appreciation for diversity. Though diverse, the management does contain this difference to ensure its learning is not disrupted;

“We want the students and staff to be sharp and responsive but because they are coming from different backgrounds what we do is that we have a model and courses that aids in creating the difference balance among students and then feedbacks are gotten after the courses which influences the management decisions on learning, the lecturers and the students.” (RC3)

But a respondent acknowledged that the learning process gets tempered with once a while due to misinterpretation/communication arising from communicating parties which happens unconsciously and not a regular occurrence, but that influences the process because it either halts the process or creates a gap. The respondent explained that the miscommunication is often corrected and re-communicated for clarity.

“Sometimes there can be miscommunication either from a third or second party even from the main person its coming from it might not be a conscious thing it might be unconscious not that every time but it happens so it is left for the person in charge to make corrections and re-communicate back. This thing does happen either because of human differences or error...” (RC2)

It is also evident that the university and its members build **working relationships** that enables them acquire, share and make sense of information from each other through

available forums, thus fostering learning. Aside this workable relationship, the university is designed in such a way that interaction is encouraged at every level and across levels as a means of promoting learning.

“Also the tutor-mentor thing established in this university aids the learning in the system because on personal note tutors get to learn and manage students feelings and demands which are then improved by the university if the need be and that gives the room for students to have people in the system they look up to and who are always open and ready to render advices and help.” (RC3)

Communal/ working relationship is understood to shape learning in these universities.

“In the informal setting I think “cliques” so if there is a clique things may move more within/between them than for an external party to the clique this therefore hinders the flow of learning although it has its own potential benefits whereby members of a clique tend to have access to information derived from diverse sources and this might be greater if the clique exercises high influence in the university” (RA2)

“Unity and the understanding of one another in the university and also bearing in mind that we all are working for the same goal promote learning in this institution (and we give room for everyone to contribute). (RB11)

Relationships tend to inhibit learning especially when the relationships within communal relationships are restricted to and between certain people. As argued by Mazur and Bialostocka (2010) that communication problems arising from work relationships leads to negative outcomes for an organisation. On the other hand, relationships offer organisational members the opportunities to share and deliberate on views freely with others; thus fostering a collaborative working culture, similar to the views of Ely and Thomas (2001) that establishing work relationship between and within diverse members enhances creative problem solving and results in positive outcome; also provides members with different kinds of information. Interviewees further stressed that the existence of strong communal relationships promotes teamwork in the system, which is evident in the committee system in use:

“Committee systems also function properly because of relationships...” (RA5)

Furthermore, the researcher was opportune to observe the interaction between organisational members of different levels during the course of investigation. In Cases Alpha and Beta the interaction between organisational members of the same level was commonly exercised, and members of different levels interacted more with other levels during the operation of certain mechanisms. One example of this is students’ interaction with the academic arm and key players; this interaction is more fluid during classes and

union meetings as oppose a one on one interaction except for class representatives and union Government who are able to access members of different organisational level on a one on one basis. In identifying these students in Case Alpha, their identity bands were coloured differently from other students, while in Case Beta they were tagged with badges. Interactions with the administrative arms in these universities are more freely exercised than with the academic arms. In Case Cairo however, different levels could interact with each other with no limitation or fear, just as the researcher was able to freely access the chancellor without an appointment.

Beside the strong communal relationships, teamwork is another cultural dimension of these universities. In Case Alpha, teamwork is practiced at every level of the organisation-from top management to student level- as a powerful source and enabler of organisational learning. **Teamwork** allows organisational members learn from members who bring in diverse knowledge based on their allocated responsibilities for criticism and use in achieving the goals of the university, similar to the findings of Swift (2013). Therefore the culture of the university is effortlessly characterised by a strong communal relationship and teamwork spirit. Similarly, respondents in Case Beta emphasized that the university is a setting incapable of functioning without teamwork because of its nature of existence and how it operates. Teamwork is a long lived culture of this university found at every level and this influences learning positively:

"Team spirit is part of this university. We need teamwork to survive. No man is an island. Students work collaboratively at their level, the committee system is teamwork because tasks are evenly fulfilled by members of teams. I must say teamwork makes learning..." (RB5)

"I wonder how the university will be without collaboration between staff and students." (RB9)

While teams are forum for learning and teamwork builds learning when properly managed, it also exerts disastrous influences on learning. Team members who do not carry out their functions or contribute hinder the learning process and deprive others of learning because most times the process is incomplete.

"The university is a system; we are teammates so everyone must contribute for learning to be effective... The students are also responsible for some learning problems themselves because they fail to meet the expectation of their level they prefer to smuggle their way through..." (RB7)

Case Cairo also portrays a culture that promotes **teamwork**. This is evident in the collective activities and functions the university and its members undertake. For example, the town hall meeting is attended and participated by all organisational

members, offering them the stage to contribute unanimously, enabling information processing and learning of the system. Also the classroom and clubs present opportunities for students, students and staff to work together as teams to learn and achieve the team's goals. In conclusion, teamwork promotes the learning in Case Cairo.

It was also identified that organisational members' ***personal values, practices and behaviours*** are shaped by the culture of their universities. Organisational members of Case Alpha, mostly operate according to instructions and directives of the management- either planned or emergent- reflecting the kinship pattern of the Nigerian economy, where people are domestically trained to follow instructions with little or no resistance, only in cases of wrong instructions (Onwumechili, 1996).

"It is just a zombie setup whereby you just tell people to go and do things irrespective of the consequences" (RA3)

This practice/ behaviour is identified as an inhibitor to organisational learning since it curtails the ability of organisational members to act based on initiatives. Although respondents argue that adhering to and carrying out right instructions reduces time wastage and problems associated with freewill individual initiatives and analysis and sets clear direction for learning: thus fostering organisational learning. Thus supporting Martinez-Leon and Martinez-Garcia (2011) argument that an instructive culture negates learning, but this practice also fosters learning in this university. This style of operation is driven by the management and leadership styles. Analysis of interview responses indicates that the management/leader-led learning is the dominantly used approach, which is the top-bottom approach:

"Information processing is one sided it is a one way traffic...it's just up-down approach" (RA10)

Yet another respondent advocates,

"Management should encourage social freedom, a circularised environment where you can say and do what you want because the university is an experimental stage for the larger society" (RA14)

Management and leadership styles are major dimensions of organisational culture and organisational learning (Amitay et al., 2005; Castiglione, 2006; Nafei et al., 2012). Within Case Alpha, little involvement and consultation of top *management/leadership* with other organisational members has limiting effects on learning activities, particularly the interpretation phase of information processing, since establishing such contact creates a sense of belonging among organisational members and provides them

the opportunity to present their views (Hatala and Lutta, 2009). Interviewees further stressed that with the stratified structure of the university, top leaders have less direct involvement with organisational members and this is identified as unfavourable for learning.

In Case Beta, organisational members operate according to instructions and initiatives subject to management approval. Organisational members of Case Beta are granted the autonomy of working on initiatives as oppose the strict adherence to instructions in Case Alpha. It is therefore obvious that this university operates both a top-bottom and bottom-up approach to information processing and learning. These approaches influence learning differently. Respondents explained that instructions receive pertaining learning in and by the university are always relevant and beneficial to their learning.

“New ideas are welcomed and easily developed upon so that encourages one to hold on. Also the thought and understanding that one must commit for the university to be a better system encourages staff to learn and develop the system for our tomorrow’s leaders not for the salary...when we adhere to learning patterns made available by the authority it is because learning that way is good for the system at that point...” (RB3)

But the university does not depend solely on instructions. It carries out its own learning by organizing its activities even under the funding of the State Government and that enables proactive and reactive organisational learning. These approaches however reveal the kind of management and leadership styles in use by Case Beta. Because the management of this university encourages the involvement of organisational members in committees, it shows that close contact is established between organisational members and top management and leaders (Cox and Jones 2005; Skerlavaj et al., 2010). According to respondents key officials are part of every committee set up in the university.

“Every committee is headed by a top person in management...” (RB2)

“The leadership portrays zealous attributes in the development of this university through its source for manpower both within and outside the country in terms of qualified lecturers and staff composition generally...” (RB3)

Despite the stratified structure in place, Case Beta encourages participation and delegate authority and responsibilities to encourage members’ engagement; thus fostering learning and decentralization.

Case Cairo currently does not hold a firm structure, so it is opened in its operations and certain culture attributes. Organisational members do take directives from the management and board, but they are also permitted to counter such directives at open forums. Organisational members are also encouraged to work on their initiatives as long as it is line with the university's goals and values (should obtain permission from the management). In essence, the university works following directives as well as opened to changes and relevant initiatives therefore not limiting itself by learning from instructions but also learning from initiation and suggestions put forward.

"The university encourages innovation in every aspect. New ideas are welcomed as long as it suits our purpose..." (RC7)

In Case Cairo, the feedback flow/mechanism in use reflects the involvement of top management with other arms believing their views matter in the operation and learning in the university, even when directives are put forward. This goes a long way in influencing learning because feedback enables the university learn-organisational members are able to confer or table their concerns on the learning process and how it can be improved through feedback as confirmed in the studies of Greve (2003) and Showing et al (1999). The university management also operates an open door policy, where organisational members are free to consult with the VC and other top management officials on issues of concern. This management/leadership style builds high level of involvement and contact between management and organisational members, enabling participation, easy communication, and clarification directly with the management on learning issues.

"The lines of communication fosters learning because lines of communication has to be open in a system as the saying goes if you cannot communicate then you cannot learn it's a two way process management is learning every day and the people being managed are learning and same goes to the staff and the students as well so it's all about communicating this is why nothing beats face to face contact technology is just an enhancer but the face to face contact helps to put things better into context you are looking at body language you are looking at emotions and you get a deeper meaning of things and you get the full/deeper meaning and interpretation of things." (RC6)

These universities also have a long-lived culture of **training and capacity building** of organisational members. Capacity building is a critical criterion for organisational learning and the achievement of organisational goals. Case Alpha's respondents pointed that although employees are free to build themselves intellectually on personal basis, but this culture was inculcated by the university, because it appreciates the positive effects of developing its human resources. Training and capacity building however

enables organisational learning because it broadens minds, permits the exchange of information and knowledge, it enables individual and organisational development, similar to the arguments of Kocoglu et al (2011):

“Another thing is the issue of capacity building it encourages staff to put in their best efforts towards developing the system because without capacity building we won't have a system like this” (RA7).

“Staff development is encouraged and the university is also conversant with global trends... that encourages learning to occur in the system” (RA5)

“Capacity development funds we get also give us reasons to carry out learning in the university” (RA8).

Similar to Case Alpha, Case Beta has an old culture of training and developing organisational members. This culture is evident in their compulsory participation in national and international programs yearly; and also the existence of a learning centre in the university as outlined by respondents and seen by the researcher. The culture of training and development not only promotes organisational learning of Case Beta, it also develops its members and the organisation. This is because acquired knowledge builds the system intellectually and knowledge put to practice enhances the operations and service provision of the university (Jacobs and Washington, 2003).

“The management has made commitment in enhancing the minds of its wards through training and development so that the system could give better services to the society at large...” (RB7)

“...The University is willing to train its resource to become more knowledgeable...” (RB12)

Case Cairo also has the culture of not only training and developing its human resource, but also ensures that the human resources represent the university properly within the university (in daily activities and organized conferences/courses) and external activities (external conferences and quizzes). Developing and exposing Case Cairo's human resource shapes the learning in the university. Organisational members getting trained and attending external conference helps the university builds its resources and its memory organisationally (increasing its knowledge, learning diversely), similar to the notion of Jacobs and Washington (2003). On the contrary, such exposure especially on the part of the students, sometimes shapes the learning process. This is because some students are mostly interested and good at outdoor activities while not necessarily contributing to the learning process of the university itself; thus inhibiting organisational learning of Case Cairo.

"The single greatest factor I think is the students not coming to class because there has to be contact for learning to occur..." (RC1)

6.2.2 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Analyses show that Cases Alpha and Beta operate similar structures while that of Case Cairo is different. The public universities operate the **hierarchical (bureaucratic) and informal structures**, while the private university operates a **flat and informal structure**. In addition, organograms of all universities were obtained and observed by the researcher in understanding the structure and how it relates to organisational learning. The hierarchical structure consist of several levels, with decision making and learning occurring through these levels, usually authored from the top down to the bottom level. Decision making and learning are usually carried out through an organized process and strict instructions, with the clear definition and understanding of responsibilities of organisational members (Martin and Terblanche, 2003). This structure entails a lot of formalities and processes and this is not appreciated by most organisational members because they consider the process hectic and in certain cases members of the top-management level use their status and authority to influence the learning process; thus encouraging internal politics. This Internal political influence shapes organisational learning negatively:

"When you try to question or draw your superior's attention towards the protocols, he might decide to use his executive fiat to harass, intimidate and suppress any dissenting voice which shouldn't be" (RA3)

Another respondent stated:

"Also the composition of the senate matters a lot. Having too many members who are barely interested in the affairs of the school to a large extend affects how the organisation learns because they might stand as blockers or stakeholders who are difficult to change and also they limit the change process. And you know learning is change and change is learning as well" (RA14).

In Case Beta, as much as authority resides with key officials and top management, allowances are provided for inputs from subordinates subject to scrutiny. To this end, learning occurs through these structures, either through the top-down, down-up hierarchy patterns or through personal relationships cutting across organisational hierarchy (Dicle and Okan, 2015).

Case Cairo on the other hand, operates the **flat and informal structure** probably because it is a new university. Currently, the university has fewer levels of middle

management between organisational members and top management. Decision making and learning are carried out with the involvement of organisational members, exposing the organisational structure to changes because of the contribution of organisational member to the system. Role functions are defined but are certainly subject to alteration as the university is constantly trying different ways to operate within (Harris and Raviv, 2002). As earlier noted by a respondent, this form of structure allows for easy change and learning as well because the structure is not yet bureaucratic but it is opened and flexible, similar to the findings of Curado (2006). Conversely, some respondents argued that learning without a clear structure is limiting because responsibilities are not fully allotted to organisational members as found in Cases Alpha and Beta, only for academics whose functions are quite obvious.

“When it comes to learning the school is designed in a three pattern theme; lectures, classes and interactive and every lecturer must be engaged in this learning technique... (Re-emphasized)” (RC7)

“For every organisation there should be a proper structure that states the hierarchy of positions, the level of authority, the way information flows because if it is not done that way there will always be chaos because if you are not aware of the clear responsibilities and duties of certain personnel you are bound to misfire at one point or the other and information processing might also be tempered with so having a clear defined structure which can be properly interpreted by everyone in the system will resolve and improve learning. (RC3)

Considering the nature of informal relationships found in these universities, the informal structure is more preferable to operate in learning because it sets out official barriers and permits the interaction between colleagues, subordinates and superiors without limitation. Respondents further acknowledged that the informal structure is used not because learning and communication is not possible through the bureaucratic structure, but because the informal pattern is more effective and easily accessed and in the course of informal interaction, learning occurs and it is better retained through that structure, supporting the argument of Curado (2006).

“Informal organisation, friendship, incentives and the freedom to contribute which helps us grow and then we feel that innovative ideas are welcomed and can be adopted are certain factors that promote OL in this university” (RA11).

“Learning informally sticks more. I mean learning in an environment or forum where you drop all the official jargons and relate freely with people, your mates, superiors, the students, broadens the scope, and everyone learns too because there are no heavy guidelines or rules.” (RB8).

In line with Lavie et al (2010) finding, a respondent made mention of the negative influence of the informal structure on learning:

“Informally people may give you information and this can influence learning because such source might not be authentic even if the information is true and such information can easily be disclaimed because where somebody who is not acting in official capacity gives you information it is not considered to be something you can hold them to” (RA2)

Informally too, organisational members of Case Cairo learn from colleagues, superiors and subordinates through established informal relationships, contributing to the learning in the organisation. No one mentioned any adverse effect of informal relationship and structure in the process of learning, rather respondents capitalised on the relevance of informal structure in organisational learning of the university and it is an acceptable structure in use.

“The informal relationship and interaction we establish here promotes learning...to survive today you need relationship, it is very important.” (RC9)

The informal structure has been developed over strong relationships among organisational members, and this facilitates information and knowledge exchange and learning in the organisation and its members. Essentially, both structures shape the learning in these universities. The bureaucratic structure clearly hampers learning as the autonomy of members is restricted- *“...with bureaucracy like I said we have limits...” (RA3)*-. Organisational members are expected to adhere to instructions to learn-learning is often according to the definition of responsibilities and formal channels, thereby promoting learning in a limited way, with little or no freedom to explore. Although a respondent argues on the benefits of learning through the formal structure:

“Although the university structure is rigid, it still presents good media for learning...the committee system is a make-up of members from different departments and schools...there is a purpose for the system but learning is also one...we learn from each other not minding the department” (RA1).

While, from a respondent in Case Beta, it was argued that the hierarchical structure in of the university is less stringent than that found in Federal public universities and the communication gap is not wide. Because of this, organisational learning is easily carried out through the bureaucratic structure: thus confirming the argument of Su and McNamara (2012) that formalization fosters learning:

“Organisational learning here is not horrendous. I work as a part time staff at X Federal University and I have seen both worlds. The structure of that school is thick, difficult to penetrate and the communication is something else. While in this university, you can approach whoever you want to. You can even access the VC’s office freely. Procedures are present but it’s flexible as compared to those of X University. I think this is so because of the size and age of this university.” (RB1)

However, informal and hierarchical structures promote organisational learning of this university. But bureaucracy was mentioned by respondents as a barrier to learning, explaining that this influence is due to the formalities associated with the structure as argued by Cohendet and Llerena (2001).

"The bureaucratic nature of the system in the sense that lectures and other activities must be carried out on campus (the physical site) and then the course contents to an extent are too rigid so these to a certain level hamper learning in the organisation..." (RB8)

Yet another

"Another major challenge is bureaucracy it takes a long time for change to be effected and then the channel it takes a lot of process. Like if you have a suggestion or something you have to report to your boss and when the boss doesn't consider the suggestion useful it ends there and if it is considered useful he pushes further and if the recipient feels it is not useful enough it ends there too..." (RB5)

It was further established that these organisational structures permit and fosters ***cross-departmental/functional set-ups*** or teams that shape learning differently in these universities. In Case Alpha, the informal structure as explained by respondents grants them autonomy to learn within the strict walls through committees and similar structures, thereby enabling learning and enhances organisational members' productivity and commitment. This structure is less stringent and allows more communication flow across the university. It also fosters learning more because it enables the free flow of information and knowledge and members freely decide and adopt the appropriate learning strategy for use depending on the learning activities. This is in line with the findings of Hatala and Lutta (2009). Similarly, in Case Cairo informal structure also permits cross-departmental/functional interaction that also influence organisational learning but mostly on rapport level-*"having an informal relationship with colleagues presents a medium for information sharing"* (RC1)- except for clubs and societies that foster cross-departmental teams which also promotes learning for members of these groups and the organisation as well (as the end product of their activities is usually the property of the university). On the contrary, as much as bureaucracy is disliked in Case Beta, it defines forums through which initiatives are worked upon to enable learning. The most common example of such forum is the committee system. Committees not only enable individual contribution, but the fusion of initiatives to develop a common meaning suitable for organisational representation. In essence, committees promote teamwork and collaborative activities. Committee

systems also offer **autonomy** to members because they act independently and in the best interest of the institution. In attaining independence, these committees undertake activities and actions not influenced by the school authority but in the best conduct.

6.2.3 LEARNING STRATEGY

Selected universities develop and adopt their learning strategy based on purpose, learning activities or practices, modes of learning, environment and goals (Hirsh 2005; Tippins and Sohi 2003). This a respondent in Case Alpha confirms:

“The way the university learns maybe driven by purpose, or other forces within the environment...that contributes to the achievement of the university’s goal” (RA7).

While in Case Beta learning strategies are developed or adopted based on the purpose of learning:

“When we are trying to learn about new developments in other universities and educational institutions we visit and collaborate with these schools. But when we want to learn about past events occurring again in the university, we go back to our books, our records...” (RB7)

And Case Cairo operates an open learning strategy where learning activities are tried and carried out as long as it suits the university’s purpose, all because there is no clear structure in place. Although some strategies are employed as ideal practice because they are utilised by similar universities, for example establishing student societies for learning purposes. In essence, it can be argued that Case Cairo’s learning strategy(s) is guided by normative elements and the goals of the university in the absence of a clear structure. Based on analyses, these universities utilise both **exploratory and exploitative strategies** in order to learn. Learning strategies are pursued organisationally with the allocation of certain responsibilities to individuals or groups (Inkpen and Tsang, 2005). For exploration, Cases Alpha and Beta learn through and from trainings/developmental programs, research, collaborations with parties. Trainings and research are usually undertaken individually on behalf of the organisation while the visitation and consultation with other HEIs and research also are done collaboratively as teamwork. These exploratory activities are carried out when the aim of learning resides in identifying trends or ways of improving the system or in attempt to mimic other institution’s good practices, similar to the notion of (Lamberson & Sachdeva (2013) and March (1991).

“The university is also conversant with global trends it doesn’t want to be left behind so it is open to new trends in other universities out there and the university is constantly working towards improving its feasibility both at local and international level by signing memorandum of understanding with foreign universities in the areas of research and corporation... so these are some of the ways the university learns” (RA5)

Similarly, Case Cairo exploratory activities includes: research carried out with both colleagues and external scholars; participating in external learning programs like quizzes and conferences. Engaging in exploratory activities enables Case Cairo’s learning; as well as they serve as sources of information that builds the learning process of Case Cairo:

“Staff go for conferences sponsored by the school...we also organise conferences and people attend. We just had one, am sure you saw the banner at the gate. So that is another source of information...and we make sure we have them on records” (RC9)

Strategies that support explorative activities in Case Beta promote organisational learning simply because respondents’ belief exploration enables self and organisational discovery which motivates them to learn:

“Why does the school research? To explore and uncover things we want to know. Research leads to discoveries both for those involve and the organisation itself... we research because of what we feel will be discovered; it is a motivation...” (RB1)

On the contrary, it was obtained in Case Alpha that learning strategies of the university that supports exploratory activities do not highly motivate organisational members because selected members are assigned to engage in the activities on behalf of the university although they are carried out in line with organisational goals. While a respondent acknowledged that personal explorative activities motivates him to learn, but it is problematic because of the costs involved:

“Tapping intellectual resources from external sources stimulates my thoughts and learning, but the costs associated with the activity are outrageous and discouraging, but one has to sacrifice to learn” (RA12).

For **exploitation**, these universities often refer to documentations to learn about past events occurring or likely to occur. In some cases personnel who have experienced reoccurring events stand as testimonies on how such events were managed. Another common exploitation activity carried out in these universities is the consultation of library materials like books and journals to tap available knowledge. Learning strategies that support exploitation encourages organisational learning because they are sources of knowledge which are made available for access always and accessible by all. To this

end, a respondent in Case Alpha explained that no knowledge is waste and the re-visitation of stored knowledge presents new insights whenever it was re-analysed and that motivates learning in the system.

"I don't know if it's the past documents, resources or the people analysing them that bring out the newness" (RA10)

Beside the consultation and use of library materials, Case Cairo exploits repository materials (like the university portal), students' contributed presentations and documentations. These activities help the university learn using existing knowledge by utilising the knowledge to serve their purpose of learning at any given time similar to Kane and Alavi' (2007) view. Also, for the fact that these materials are constantly updated provides wider knowledge options for the university:

"The information and learning system is quite varied in terms of us having the library stocked with updated books, journals and then the network thing and also through the interactive process we get information..." (RC8)

Conversely, respondents in Case Alpha and Beta argue on the limiting effects of exploitation activities on learning. Respondents explained that learning materials like books are stale; and the use of stale learning materials by the university inhibits learning, similar to the argument of Lavie et al (2010) that exploitation challenges learning because it is concern with stability and inertia. This is because past knowledge is recycled among organisational members especially the lower level with little or no new meaning or knowledge derive from it; and these members rely on such information without exploring externally for updates or suitability of use.

"Most learning materials are stale no revisiting or reflection by lecturers to improve" (RA11)

"Most library materials get outdated ... and all that affects OL..." (RB6)

However, whatever learning strategy theses universities employ is influenced by their organisational culture, available resources or need for learning as posited by Tippins and Sohi (2003). For instance, in Case Alpha learning through and from the development of human resources is a long-time learning strategy driven by the culture of the university – *"...training is part and parcel of this system"*. Additionally, resources-financial and non-financial- are weighed in assessing the suitable learning strategy:

"The management does not just jump into training without a budget, available human resources and other requirements" (RA4)

Yet another respondent;

"Sending staff [organisational members] abroad for school and courses is not a day's decision...it involves the accumulation of resources." (RA8)

In Case Beta it was explained that learning strategies are dynamic and the purpose of learning also changes. This a respondent stated:

"We also learn from Government parastatals like the State Ministry of Education on trending practices...it means we learn differently depending on what we want to know." (RB4)

While for Case Cairo, it has no one way of learning, thereby adopting several learning strategies according to the university's needs:

"I cannot tell you there is a specific process when it comes to organisational learning because this is actually a new university..." (RC5)

In essence, there is no one acceptable learning strategy in these universities, but their ability to explore and exploit knowledge and information when appropriate; and set a balance between these two activities is important for the universities learning (Arshad et al 2016; Beer et al., 2005; March, 1991).

6.2.4 ORGANISATIONAL RESOURCES

Respondents acknowledged that the availability of resources shapes organisational learning in universities. These resources vary and are provided for by the Government, university management, external bodies and partially contributed by other organisational members' efforts. In Case Alpha, human, non-financial and financial resources were identified as the primary resources required for learning in the University; with most of the resource coming from the Government. Other sources include the university's alumni, individual and organisational donors like the banks as part of their corporate social responsibility.

"I think the major thing is the crop of people (human resources that we have). We have a number of highly emotional and intelligent people who are able to roll the ball and that leadership has helped so much in facilitating learning in this university" (RA14).

"As a university we are still standing because there are people who are trying to get things done the right way, with the right attitude so this encourages learning" (RA12)

"With enough financial resources, almost everything is possible" (RA4)

However, financial resource is a big shaper of learning. The allocation of financial resources are made on the basis of external, participatory and operational budgeting driven by capital expenditures, overheads, remuneration, research, developmental activities and projects. Once awhile funds are allocated for special initiatives by the Government, separate from the usual allocation. Human resources of the university are trained or set for learning according to the university development calendar and in relation to the needs of members (Case Alpha Evaluation Report, 2013:11). The university relies heavily on the Government for most of its funding, although it generates revenue internally through fees and other levies, but this is barely enough:

“Sincerely one limiting factor is funding, several units are not well funded so you find out that the materials and equipment for communication and learning are inadequate... we generate our revenue internally but it's short...we basically depend on the Government for everything” (RA2).

Yet another blames the Government for such limitation:

“If from the onset universities and other learning institutions were granted the autonomy of raising their revenues, I don't think we will be facing this dilemma with the Government” (RA11).

Similar to Case Alpha, respondents in Case Beta revealed that financial and human resource are critical for every organisation's learning as confirmed also by Child and Heaven (2003). To this end, they identified the State Government as the major source of their funds, with private organisations, alumni, individual donors and internal funds (school fees, levies and proceeds from the entrepreneurial centre) as other sources of finance. Financial resources provided by the State Government are usually made available on time which enables the university carry out learning activities.

“The State Government is our main source of finance. Beside that the private investors contribute and what is internally generated aids the system's learning activities.” (RB1)

“Also the university graduates offer support to the university because of what they have enjoyed from the system so they in turn support the university which however creates the zeal for learning...” (RB5)

Respondents also presented that non-financial resources like learning equipment are made available based on the availability of funds:

“As long as we are funded, equipment and other support materials for learning can be acquired. Government provides them; even private organisations provide us with equipment...” (RB4)

In essence the university's fund determines its provision of learning equipment and materials. This influence is favourable when funds available are enough to acquire

relevant materials. Adversely insufficient funding limits learning. But a respondent opposed such view believing that this is not the case in their university.

“Because the University has a mandate of learning even in the midst of insufficient fund, members of this university resolve in sacrificing a lot for the university to learn. So whether the funds are enough or not as long as we receive them on time we do our best to maximize it. What I am saying is that we learn through thick and thin.” (RB6)

In line with the findings of Ranjbar and Absalan (2015), the university’s human resource also shapes organisational learning. Positively, developing human resources of Case Beta through refreshers courses, in-house and external trainings creates a sense of belonging in organisational members motivating them to learn and aid the learning process in the university. To this, a respondent explained:

“We have the manpower because of the goodwill the university has developed overtime it encourages and supports ideas and innovations that will enrich the system. It offers trainings and development to its human resource motivating them to learn...” (RB3)

Although it was identified that the inability to identify appropriate developmental programs often result in the repetition of trainings and it was considered demotivating to learning. Organisational members are more enticed when fresh courses are offered at trainings:

“We face the challenge of not getting the right courses for training of staff because we realised that it’s like a repetition of courses for instance attending the same training twice in the same location for two years so there is little or no motivation to learn...” (RB9)

Human resource also limits the process of organisational learning by deliberate actions they exhibit in distorting the flow of information and learning:

“The human factor is always there. Sometimes when information comes and the officer who is meant to disseminate may not be around to carry out the function and urgent information that needs quick attention could be on his desk for quite some time and that is a barrier to learning in the system which are human made...” (RB4)

While in Case Cairo, respondents and university’s documentations show that the financial, human resources and other resources like the growing technologies and infrastructure are provided by the proprietor and the board of trustees. Aside the above sources, the students are also main streams of finance, through their school fee and levies (like examination resit fees). The proprietor (pro-chancellor) confessed in an interview that providing basic resources for learning was a big challenge but still became successful because of the availability of financial, human resources and other non-financial/ tangible resources:

"But if you ask me how I made it, I would rather ask, 'how we made it'. I don't want to credit all this to myself. I've had a Board of trustees that is helpful and dedicated; I've had a good management team that is largely expatriates. I spent my nine to five, sometimes seven days a week here. I have sold nearly everything I have to do this. I have mortgaged the rest to do this." (Daily trust, 2014:13)

Considering the relevance of resources, especially the financial resource, it is evident that finance shapes the whole operation of an institution; and that includes its learning. This is because fund is a basic resource needed to assemble learning activities, mechanisms and process in place, thus reflecting the beauty or drawbacks of Case Cairo's learning. Also from the proprietor's statement, it could be drawn that **human, non-financial/tangible resources** also enables the university's learning. Case Cairo has a strong diverse human resource. Organisational members are drawn from different countries and religious backgrounds

"We have foreign students from other African countries. There is no special target as far as they are qualified. Your religion, geopolitical zone does not matter..." (Daily Trust, 2014:13)

"It has international staff and external examiners from the UK to ensure standards are compatible with those in the Britain" (University Newsletter, 2015:4)

Aside the diversity, human resources of Case Cairo are considered expatriates and qualified because they possess the required skills; they meet the university's requirements; and they are constantly building their skills. These attributes in turn influences the learning in the organisation by providing diverse contributions and unique capabilities by its human resources which could either inhibit or promote organisational learning. Human resources also learn on behalf of the university, they serve as learning forums/mechanisms and also control/support other mechanisms and resources enabling learning in the organisation. By all these functions, human resources are the major resources of the university which cannot be separated from the operations and learning activities/process of the university. Although human resource exert influences that shape learning negatively like that of miscommunication, misinterpretation, unwillingness to learn and other human errors. These influences are found mostly at the lower level-student level- as complained by some a respondent:

"The staff and management here are doing their best and the students should develop the zeal to make proper use of the organisational structure and model laid down for them because they are the major issue I think because every other material is on ground its left for them to harness and make use of it." (RC8)

Besides students attitudes towards learning, other human resources tend to shape the learning in Case Cairo Positively. It was also revealed by a respondent in Case Cairo that the commitment, dedication and contributions of organisational members foster organisational learning, as it is immeasurable but vital for learning and the survival of the university; this was also argued by Ganesh et al (2014).

"I will say perseverance, persistence and patience keeps the learning and the system going despite the challenges." (RC3)

Similarly, Respondents in Cases Alpha and Beta drew on the relevance of non-tangible resources in the process of organisational learning. They explained that these non-quantifiable resources are greatly significant and shape the learning in the university. These resources are the effort, commitment, time and motivation contributed by organisational members to either enable or limit organisational learning (Yin-nor, 2015). The availability of human, technologies and financial resources without members' dedication, time, motivation and commitment was considered a wasted effort as observed by respondents, with limitations on the learning process:

"Little or no staff motivation affects the learning structure in the university" (RA3)

"With commitment and sincerity of purpose on how the system is managed on the part of most of those at the top learning is encouraged" (RA6).

In Case Beta, organisational members commit to the University's learning because individual purpose are aligned to the university's purpose. To this end organisational members strive to enable the university's learning. Little or no commitment and devotion of organisational members to their organisation due to differences in shared values hampers organisational learning because such organisational members are part of the system only in pursuit of their personal interest.

"Most of our values are aligned with the vision and mission of the university and that makes us committed in taking the university higher; and it also influences our learning. But for those who are found here because of their personal reasons and fulfilment and not for shared purpose with the university, hmm do batter the learning of our university. It's difficult to change that until they decide to change their values..." (RB7)

"The commitment of individuals also stands as a factor because you may have all the resources but if people are not committed to that cause you may not achieve the goal. The zeal, enthusiasm to which people are interested in achieving the goal I think is a decisive factor." (RB3)

These universities also have **growing technologies**. These technologies include the availability and use of the internet and other software, university portal. University

portals are accessed by students and staff through the use of usernames and passwords. The portal consists of documents, personal and university programs and interactive forums through which organisational members interact to learn. Respondents acknowledged that these technologies are relevant and effective for learning.

"The university management is working hard to ensure that we have the best technologically. We have the university portal where every student is given a unique username and password to monitor school activities and lecture programs. Also we have a student corner where we interact as students; and a general corner for staff and students inputs from where everyone gets to learn. These are all done online..." (RB10)

"...Also the introduction of e-learning into the system is quite encouraging as the management trains e-fellows to apply and carry out e-learning which is something not expected to be seen in most third world countries..." (RA10)

Respondents acknowledged that determining a right balance of resources for learning inhibits learning, as certain resources are unquantifiable, and the process of achieving a right balance to them is time wasting and hardly attainable, because it is difficult to define what balance is right (Puhan, 2008). Rather what is most relevant is their ability to learn even in the midst of limited resources. In essence, the proper management of resources enables organisational learning in these universities:

"The availability and management of resources is another enabler of organisational learning. It is not just about having the resources but possessing the capabilities and skills to manage them. Imagine if we don't have the skills and experience, how will we coordinate and manage students who we impart knowledge to and from whom the university learns from also." (RB13)

The present state of these universities as observed by the researcher revealed how much resources were available or lacking. The Government universities had both ongoing constructions and some worn out structures and facilities with the inscription of donors on them (Government or others). While some learning technologies were outdated and archaic, updated versions were seen as well. But for Case Cairo all structures and facilities are still new and updated being a fairly new university.

Organisational resource is another element shaping organisational learning in research universities. This element is however inseparable from the organisational culture of the organisation as claimed by Osibanjo and Adeniji (2013:115) that *"organisational culture help to provide opportunity and broad structure for the development of human resources, technical and behavioural skills in an organisation"*. In essence, the way resources are managed in an organisation to an extent is the function of organisational culture.

6.2.5 ORGANISATIONAL POLITICS

In these universities, individuals and groups are sources of internal politics with great influence on the process of organisational learning. This is because the university is a special system consisting of organisational members with broad interests, who undertake learning activities or engage in processing of information in pursuit of their **individual interest**, besides that of the organisation (Bauer and Erdogan, 2012).

“Some staff don’t merit working here they just apply and get recruited here because they have no job offer elsewhere so they don’t show passion for the work...they consider their interest first above that of the organisation, especially when it relates to learning” (RA3)

In Case Beta, Respondents revealed that politics is played at different organisational levels because of the **authority** exercised by organisational members found at strategic positions who are capable of encouraging or distorting the learning process of the university Ferdinard (2004).

“As long as there is authority and power residing in few hands then influences must be there. Politics is one influence...” (RB1)

Political interference in learning in Case Beta stems from the influence key officials exert in relation to trainings especially the international training. It was explained that key officials try to secure slots for their candidates first before the subsequent selection of other organisational members to attend: thus exhibiting some form of power struggle which impedes learning as argued by Berends and Lammers (2010). Because of such exercise of power, participation in international training is often not representative although participants get to learn from these trainings.

“International trainings sponsored by the university or the Government is meant to be attended according to the selection chart of the university... but most times it is based on man know man. So it is not always representative...” (RB13)

Case Cairo like any other university consists of organisational members with broad interests. Individual interest is sure present in this setting but at it’s minimal as compared to Cases Alpha and Beta:

“Politics is the order of the day... it is everywhere and our university is no exception. I as a XX am here to build my experience, myself, and others and contribute my service; I will say these are my interests, and so do others too have their personal interest. We pursue different things but the ultimate thing here is that we work together towards the university’s goals, beyond our individual desires.” (RC5)

Just as individual interests vary so does the influence on organisational learning in Case Cairo. Organisational members whose interests do not align or support the purpose of the university which is “*learning to live*” will certainly pursue their interest above organisational goal, thereby contributing minimally towards organisational learning in the institution, as well as causing possible frictions in the learning process. A respondent explains this is rarely the case, but it occurs:

“In every organisation there will always be friction between the management and members on differences and matters. But what matters to us is that because we have goals to achieve we just have to stick together to learn to achieve our goals.” (RC2)

In addition to individual members’ interest in participating in the learning process or activities, groups also exert influences on the process thereby shaping learning in the university. Most respondents in Case Alpha complained about the **senate committee’s influence** on learning, the set-up is labelled “the most influential” in the university, consisting of a particular calibre of individuals who drive and direct the academic affairs of the university but members are found at different hierarchical levels. This allows them influence learning at different levels.

“The senate is made up of only professors...they influence a lot in the system...the learning, you can name it” (RA12)

“The status of senate members also hinders learning because most of them decide to act or feel that certain learning activities are better handled at their level and so other lower level staff tend to ignore” (RA6)

In defence of this limitation, a respondent explained that this same source of politics shapes learning positively. Most of them are members of unions who strive to develop and improve universities, so for that cause they try to minimise barriers to information processing in the system ensuring learning occurs.

“The university senate in its own way promotes learning. Members of the committee are members of unions and are expected to submit periodical reports to their unions...reports on school activities, learning activities...so with that they enable the process” (RA8)

Similarly, Case Cairo currently runs one committee system-the board of trustees and management committee that shapes learning. This committee is highly influential, it determines the operations of the university, but the influence of the board is balanced by organisational members response to whatever decision put forward by the board. This action however puts in checks and balances in the system when it comes to learning. Organisational members are part and parcel of the learning process, so their

contributions matters, in clear term their democratic views and participation matters for learning to occur. Politically, learning is shaped by the democratic involvement of all organisational levels because organisational members are offered the opportunity to criticise and make inputs; thus enabling organisational learning.

It was also identified that learning is shaped by **relationship ties** in these universities. In Case Alpha, some organisational members are granted access to certain learning activities like international training and courses over other members based on their close ties with influential members of the management who intercede on behalf of their buddies or are offered slots based on recommendation. This finding is similar to Lawrence et al (2005) explanation of episodic politics that shapes organisational learning. This however limits the fair distribution of members' participation in certain learning activities meant for all.

"Friends of top people here, get a lot of opportunities to participate in international conferences than others" (RA2)

On the contrary, the information processing/organisational learning in Case Beta is less disrupted because of relationship links and ties existing between most organisational members. A respondent noted that on several occasion some members of management steer the learning process because of their relationship links with organisational members, using their influence to drive learning and organisational goals.

"As I said before people here are entangled with friendship. You find people learning from their friends who are superiors about the university's intention before others are aware. On a good note they prepare minds on what is about to occur and once it is made known people have already started accepting and changing their views. But that could be a breach on the superior's part. But most times such information relates to our learning and development not anything destructive." (RB1)

While in Case Cairo, Organisational members of the university engage in learning activities based on merits and qualification and not favouritism or friendship- *"...the equal and fair treatment given to all promotes learning too."* (RC6)

6.3 OTHER LOCATIONAL ELEMENTS

Respondents also identified other locational elements shaping their learning. Notable amongst them are those associated with the country's condition. The inadequate provision of basic amenities especially **power supply** is a worrisome condition.

Interviewees explained that power supply is very important and needed for learning activities and information processing in the institution. Power supply is used in sourcing, distributing and storing information electronically; and lack of power also affects the server from which network is established. Power supply is hardly available for twenty-four hours without interruption, but the university provides for alternative source like standby generators for use. This encourages the process of learning, but quite costly to maintain. This inadequacy is however a great inhibitor of organisational learning in these universities.

“The University also works hard to ensure that in the absence of power supply enough diesel is provided for the generators to power the university” (RA3)

“The lack of steady power supply disrupts network services and this could also lead to hazards such as server burn down. So we are left with no option than to improvise other means of getting connection for instance through the use of modems which is another barrier (it’s an expense on the staff or the student) to learning” (RA14)

“The condition of the economy also affects our learning. There are barriers like unstable power ...and conditions which are at times beyond our control but we must thrive to achieve.” (RB2)

However respondents of Case Beta acknowledged that power is supplied because the Government power holding is currently privatised and they get the supply as long as the school’s bills are settled. In essence power supply is adequate but not perfect because disruptions do occur. This a respondent stressed:

“We use the generator to power the university but not on regular basis because there is light most times... There have been improvements since private investors took over... On average we use generator twice a week.” (RB4)

So learning is undertaken with lesser costs as compared to Case Alpha because most learning tools and equipment are operated under the State’s power supply not alternative supplies like the generator. Internet facilities in Case Beta are currently provided for through broadband cables and cords without WIFI because network coverage is limited at the location; only few networks are accessible. In cases of network disruption learning of the organisation becomes interrupted unless modems and other connectivity are established for use.

“The availability and use of the internet promotes organisational learning. This is because we can access information and communicate in an easy manner. For now we use cables connected to our systems, with WIFI...it’s a gradual process. We only face the issue of network fluctuation because network is not so strong and stable here and that interrupts the process. Aside that the electronic media encourages learning...” (RB9)

Similarly, report from Case Cairo acknowledges the challenges explained in Cases Alpha and Beta. This the proprietor in an interview explained these challenges:

“Let me start with infrastructure challenges: power, road, water, security, communication, poor internet service, having to provide 12 boreholes in this campus. FCT water board has not reached here. We have PHCN, but we have to provide the distribution line here...” (Daily Trust, 2014:13)

Another critical element shaping learning in public universities was the **security issue** faced by these universities. In Case Alpha, it was revealed that security problems limit the learning in the system, because learning activities are carried out with little concentration due to fear of attacks by notorious militants in the country:

“Considering the bombing everywhere and security threats, we can’t even learn happily and peacefully, because we are not at peace” (RA1)

“There can be no learning in an unsecured environment like ours” (RA9)

But another respondent acknowledged that the security threat is also a learning point for the university, to this the respondent stated:

“Whenever there is outbreak of violence ...it affects the learning process but also provides the university with a learning point to review, to think out everything about the university because the security situation challenges even the survival of the university” (RA7)

No one was certain of such militant actions happening, as different measures for attack are put to use by the militants (Boko haram) like bombing institutions using parked vehicles, lured kids and students, at times bombs are thrown randomly around the school. While, **Security issues** arise in Case Beta mostly due to cultural influences and scanty from militant groups like that of Case Alpha. This is because of where the university is located as most campuses targeted are those found in town where commercial activities are undertaken. In essence security threats to the learning in Case Beta are usually cultural inflicted.

“The insecurity that has bedevilled the university which is not peculiar to us but it affects us indirectly because it has discouraged professors from other parts of the world who are interested in coming to this university even though this state for now has enjoyed a measure of stability but people who have not been to Nigeria wouldn’t know the different states. So people who we would have learnt a lot from on account of insecurity and insurgency are unable to come. Our major concern is the actions of community inhabitants”. (RB13)

It was also mentioned in Cases Beta and Cairo that the **location of the university** offers an advantage and promotes organisational learning. This is because these universities are located outskirts of the state away from commercial disturbance. It is a serene

environment as postulated by respondents, but only interfered with periodically by the community inhabitants who affect their learning and operations negatively through their cultural rituals (Case Beta). Otherwise learning is better undertaken in the environment.

“The environment of the institution is a positive influencer because its situated in the outskirts of town which is basically quiet and therefore you are able to communicate with students and disseminate knowledge in a serene environment without any distraction so you feel always encouraged and motivated to come become you know that you have a quiet environment to be able to relate...” (RB9)

“The conducive environment and serenity matters when it comes to learning and that is what keep the system wanting to learn more...” (RC2)

In Case Cairo, motivation, particularly **periodic appraisal** of organisation members stood as another shaper of organisational learning in the university. Organisational members are assessed and commended through feedback, and they are provided with possible courses of action. That according to an interviewee’s confession encourages learning because they learn from the process and also get motivated to do more by learning more.

“Then periodic appraisal works for us as well because if you are doing something the appraisal will identify and then a right course of action is taken to help the situation and then facilities are always on ground to work with and that encourages learning.” (RC5)

Several locational elements shaping organisational learning were identified in case universities. **Power supply** was mentioned as an element shaping the learning in these organisations, as the process requires the use of some electronic functions to enable the flow of information. The availability and constant supply of electricity enables the universities undertake learning activities and utilize OLMs; while its disruption hampers the flow of information, thereby obstructing learning. In essence, power supply is essential for learning as noted by Brown (2001:1) *“power supply assumes a very unique role within a typical system, in many respects, it is the mother of the system. It*

6.4 DISCUSSION ON ELEMENTS SHAPING OL IN CASE UNIVERSITIES

Similar to the studies of Caronna (2004); Hoffman (1999); Scott (2014); Trevino et al (2008); Vann (2011), this study argues that elements shaping organisational learning are found within and outside case universities environments. These elements arise from

national regulations, obligations, cultural demands and from the organisational setup itself. Like the understanding of Javernick-Will (2009) that learning about elements require gaining knowledge of the regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive pillars that undergird and constitute the background of social life and behaviour, of which organisational learning is part of. Coggshall (2004) also commends that universities are exposed to diverse cultures and organisations working under unfamiliar rules, norms, resulting in significant institutional differences that influence the learning processes of these schools. In essence these elements tend to shape how universities and others organisations learn differently.

6.4.1 ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

6.4.1.1 REGULATIVE ELEMENTS

Government policies, laws and regulations on Higher Education

Government policies, laws and regulations on Higher Education are common regulative institution binding the three research universities and shaping their learning process. Government policies interfere with organizational learning of these universities according to their different setup-public or private. For Case Alpha, the Federal Government policies, specifically on funding arrangement and external control both facilitates and distorts its organizational learning. In facilitating, the use of third parties (Government representatives like NUC) to govern or monitor this university compels its learning, relative to the advocacy of Lumpkin and Lichtenstein (2005) that compelling employees to engage in practices aids in learning and identifying organizational opportunities. These Government parastatals stand as channels through which the Federal Government provides necessary learning and other resources to universities as provided by the constitution. In most situations, these resources are hardly sufficient but they form the basis for organizational learning drive in the universities- they get to start from somewhere. On the other hand, insufficient learning resources and excessive external control hinders autonomy, negatively shaping organizational learning. This finding however conforms to the voices of Child (2015) and Hanaki and Owan (2013) that the availability of limited resources and lack of autonomy distorts productive organizational learning.

For Case Beta, Government policies with regards funding arrangements and external control stems both from the Federal and State Government because it is a State university, unlike Case Alpha; thus influencing its organisational learning from both the Federal and State level. At Federal level, TETFund and other Federal parastatals provide research allocations and learning opportunities, while NUC still exerts a certain degree of control on this university-though not as high as what is found in Case Alpha-. NUC approves the curriculum of the university although the School itself designs the curriculum, but approval is obtained from NUC and also the accreditation of schools and courses according to learning activities like quality research, teaching, training and development and other attributes for accreditation and ranking. While at the State level, the State Government handles university funding and the provision of learning resources. On this note, Case Beta taps its resources from two streams, and enjoys a higher level of autonomy as compared to Case Alpha, which enables the university manage its learning with little interference. Findings further reveal that the influence of State Government policies and control in the learning in Case Beta depends on the incumbent Government's appreciation and pursuit for learning and education. This is because this appreciation fosters learning in the university, as it is evident in the contributions of the State Government towards the organisational learning and operations of the university. For this particular research State, the previous Government and its parastatals did not only provide learning resources, they funded educational and developmental programs of staff internationally on a yearly basis, and has now become a custom absorbed by the current Government as well. In addition, three batches of staff (one per batch from a local Government area) are sent abroad for PhD through MOU with foreign universities. This shows that Government policies, provision of diverse resources and human resources and autonomy promotes organisational learning in the university.

For Case Cairo, Government policies affect its organisational learning because these policies are effective on both private and public universities operating in the country (Clark and Ausukuya, 2013). NUC in particular monitors and ensures this university adheres to the regulations of running a private university- according to private university act- which failure to adhere to results in the closure of the university. Though their learning activities are not funded by the Government or its parastatals, the

university is still subject to scrutiny by NUC for approval with regards learning –its research. Funding and control of this university lies in the hands of few-board members- who are external parties found in different sectors and they exert their own form of “regulative control” on the learning in the university as it deems fit and basically not the Government. It is however arguable that Government exerts influence on all universities in Nigeria, but the level of influence differs within university. Just as Coen (2005) stress that authorities or third parties charged with regulatory functions learn to deal with different organisational arrangements differently according to different context. This means that regulators exhibit different behaviour and level of control as they regulate different settings with same purpose.

Trade Union

Evidently, Cases Alpha and Beta are members of trade unions (a normative structure). And as members, the rules and legal stands of these unions bind and guide member organisations, so any action agreed upon by the union, whether aggrieved or promotional must be undertaken by member organisations as well. These actions often shape the learning in these universities. In fostering, learning activities are put forward and organised for example learning conferences, exhibitions and programs are organized and provided for member organisations to enable their learning, similar to the argument of Geneva (2003) and Philip (2013) that trade union fosters organisational learning. On the contrary, most of the union’s actions are mostly in distorting ways, because they often arise in pursuit of learning needs or Government’s failure to fulfil their responsibility, leading to drastic outcomes like strike; thereby interrupting the learning process in these universities as union members.

6.4.1.2 NORMATIVE ELEMENTS

Collaboration with sister institutions

In accordance with the findings of Corby and Latreille (2012), Deephouse (1996), collaboration and consultation with similar or other HEIs and organisations arise purely as a normative value and an ideal path pursued by most universities, especially in public universities like Cases Alpha and Beta. Case Alpha basically collaborates with similar universities- Federal Universities- like itself for learning purposes, during which information is processed, knowledge is exchanged, practices and activities are observed and recommended by host universities for replication in sister university. This is

however considered a basis for easy flow of knowledge and learning from external systems in order to encourage similarity in behaviour and structure with other Federal universities in the country; what DiMaggio and Powell (1983) referred to as “institutional isomorphism”. This is however different with Case Beta, it collaborates with other HEIs non-restrictively i.e. Federal and State universities, technical schools and polytechnics, and other organisations too, thereby tapping knowledge and learning from a wide source of environment unlike Case Alpha. On this, Argote (2013) and Yan (2004) commend that relating with organisations of different structures promotes knowledge sharing and learning although certain learning barriers exist. One special form of collaboration found in Case Beta is its partnership with private organisations, which is not obtained in the other universities. This partnership broadens the learning scope of the university and it is established as a common practice by most State universities mostly encouraged by State Governments. The most influential point that stands against the university learning more from private organisations is the differences in their organisational purpose: profit and non-profit making setups. As Gilson et al (2009) and Greiling and Halachmi (2013) marked that public organisation learning from private organisations can hardly be useful in their realm because of distinct features and aims, rather they learn more from partners, rivals and comparators. Aside this argument, Case Beta has strived to mimic some practices of private organisations through learning. One of which is the entrepreneurial behaviour (activities) which is not only taught as a course in the university, but an entrepreneurial centre has been provided by the Government to practice and equip organisational members and the university to act and behave entrepreneurially, though on a small scale. This finding however counters DiMaggio and Powell’s (1983) argument that organisations mimic not only similar organisations but also other dissimilar organisations with practices and behaviours relevant to them. Rather it is a practical example of what Meyer (2002) explains as new public management (new managerialism), the movement of educational institutions towards becoming entrepreneurial and proactive.

Case Beta learning from diverse educational and organisational settings presents the university as more exposed to learning as compared to Case Alpha, but this learning becomes useful only when information obtained or knowledge gained can be replicated

and modelled to suit the university, similar to the findings of Frumkin and Galaskiewicz (2004), Mizruchi and Fein (1999). Case Alpha on the contrary limits its collaboration; thus limiting its learning frame, thereby missing the opportunity of learning from other HEIs with unique information, knowledge and contributions required by the university.

Competition

Competition is a common normative element shaping organisational behaviour, especially in private sector (Guler et al 2002; Miller 2010). On the contrary, competition also drives public organisation's behaviour but in a different dimension- "*competition is now relevant in many policy areas...social services are increasingly exposed to competition... competition is also relevant [in] the military*" (Greve, 2008:26). While Case Cairo competes in the organisational field for potential students to be its base with other private universities, Case Alpha competes with other HEIs on grants- especially research grants for learning purposes. Also a rare form of competition is experienced in Cases Alpha and Beta- the student competition. This is where potential students compete to get access into the university by achieving exceptional grades, unlike the usual competition of organisations thriving to win a fair market share as defined by Frey (2008); this is a case of the market competing for acceptance.

The competition to win grants from the national education trust fund and international bodies ignites and promotes the learning in the university because these grants are won on basis of set criteria like the quality of research, rating of previous research, contributions and impact of research on the society and the educational setting and much more. This is a whole learning process, where the university engages in series of information processing, learning activities to present itself worthy of obtaining the grant. Also when undertaking the research or project itself, the university gets to learn in the process, so the learning here is two-ways. For potential students, they compete for access into the university because of the university's ranking and recognition and societal impact which falls back to their ability to learn and transform this learning to a recognizable and reputable image worth competing for; similar to the findings of Farrukh and Waheed (2015).

For Case Cairo to compete in the market for students it learns from developed universities and others modelled after it-the British system, reflecting mimetic

isomorphism, when organisations model themselves on other organisation by copying their practices or following similar paths, as presented by Corallo et al (2011). This university imitates other similar systems in order to provide an edge in its services over other private universities, as only few students are understood to access private universities in Nigeria due to costs constraints. So therefore, potential students look for exceptional services and value for their money and also an environment that enables learning as well.

Labour congress membership/ Societies

While becoming members of trade union is not mandatory or a regulative requirement; it is perceived by most organisations and the public as an obligatory function and the channel for economic development and change (Kang 2012; Pernicka and Glassner 2014). Membership of trade unions confirms on member organisations the expectation to behave ethically by the public; that is viewing them as acting ethically. Although membership of trade union is a normative element, it is driven and guided by regulative stance that shapes members' behaviours and actions, thereby influencing organisational learning in these organisations as a form of behaviour.

In Nigeria, only public universities are members of trade unions, while private universities encourage their students to be part of societies and clubs with no control of exerting any form of promotional or aggressive actions and it is not bound by regulations. This reality is however different from what is obtained in western world (Geneva 2003; Hyman 2007; Livingstone & Raykov 2005). Trade unions like those found in public universities-ASUU, NASU, SSANU and SUG-shape the running, the learning in universities. As earlier mentioned, these unions serve as learning grounds through the interaction between internal and external members, engagement in learning and educational programmes to learn about new trends, development and practices as it relates to universities. On the other hand, the negativity arises from disruptive actions like strikes, aggressive rallies carried out by the unions, therefore invading and halting the learning process in the universities. For Case Cairo, societies and clubs serve as learning mechanisms both within and external to the university. Common societies and clubs established by private universities are mostly operated for learning purposes- competitions, quizzes, exhibitions and promotion of intellectual

properties- with no additional intention of exhibiting negative actions like those of trade unions.

Community service

Case Alpha's engagement in community services enables its learning and that of the participating communities, similar to Holland's (1997) notion of service-learning. These services are usually sponsored by non-governmental organisational to reach out to local communities in research, to empower and commune with inhabitants on different courses. In fulfilling these tasks, staff are trained and equipped to provide these services. In turn, these staff train and educate members of participating communities, steer interaction and communication from which the university taps information and knowledge, and also access unique learning and findings that tend to be useful to the university system. Delgado (2002) argued that learning and knowledge acquisition knows no bounds and this is a good example of such.

Institutional autonomy

Case Cairo stands alone as the research university with institutional control, having the right to direct its learning unlike like Cases Alpha and Beta with Government influencing their learning. Institutional Autonomy promotes organisational learning in Case Cairo because it offers the university the opportunity to explore in order to learn, being a new university it still reflects flexibility as opposed the two fully structured public universities. In essence, the autonomy the university enjoys enhances its learning and flexibility as Fumasoli et al (2014) state that autonomy encourages exploratory activities and learning in organisations. In opposition, high level of autonomy leads to mismanagement and negates on organisational learning as expressed by respondents. This confirms the argument of Jin and Lee (2012) who claim that instead of high level of autonomy enhancing more learning in the organisation because control is minimal, excessive autonomy distorts learning because of little or no monitoring of learning activities wrongly prioritised and this arises due to cultural differences. Organisational autonomy offers organisational members the right of choice when it comes to learning on behalf of the university. This learning is suppose to be carried out for organisational use and hardly individual purpose but because of excessive autonomy organisational members consume the learning for personal use without sharing acquired knowledge; thereby curtailing organisational learning.

6.4.1.3 CULTURAL-COGNITIVE ELEMENTS

Cultural background and orientation

Culture is a major trait/element shaping organisational behaviour and the learning in research universities, similar to the findings of Rao (2013). This element is a clear reflection of a multi-cultural country like Nigeria: one made up of thirty-six states, more than 250 ethnic groups and 521 dialects, each having different and unique cultural beliefs and orientations, which tend to have complementing or distinguishing effects on the learning in case universities. This is because the university is an environment made of both national and international organisational members from diverse cultural backgrounds. According to Gjuraj (2013), Paunkovic et al (2014), Rao (2011) national culture plays an indescribable role in organisational learning and other internal organisational processes of organisations, and so does it in universities. This role as identified in this research could either be a facilitating or distorting role. In consideration of the former and in line with the thoughts of Ely and Thomas (2001), the existence of unique and diverse cultural orientations in these universities enables learning. This is because organisational members with different cultural views contribute their cognition to the information processing, learning experience and activities of the university, enabling other organisational members to queue into their choices, reasons and justifications. Just as Schein (1993:41) acclaims *“any form of organisational learning, therefore, will require the evolution of shared mental models that cut across the subcultures of the organisation”*. This therefore creates diversity when it comes to organisational learning and Lopuch and Davis (2014) stressed that diversity fosters learning, as learning involves the ability to be flexible, change and diverse in all ramifications. Also diverse cultural orientations stand to provide the uniqueness of learning in the Nigerian economy if only this cultural stance will be converted to suit and reflect the true identity of the country and imbibe cultural heritage for use and capable of being access by the external world.

In opposition, the existence of vast cultural orientation distorts organisational learning, thereby limiting the flow of knowledge and learning in the system. This is a typical issue found in Cases Alpha and Beta that have allowed the interference of cultural orientations in the activities and learning in the universities because of their respect for

cultural beliefs and justification which is out of Government control as well, and therefore accommodated. In Case Cairo, cultural beliefs are respected but the university cuts the boarder of religious and cultural beliefs and practices insisting that such should be dropped off while engaging with the university environment, therefore curtailing the cultural interference and upholding the pursuit of the university's purpose.

Religion

Similar to cultural orientations, religious belief is another cultural- cognitive institution shaping organisational learning in universities. Here some religious beliefs are upheld higher than cultural beliefs because Nigeria is a country with high consciousness for "moral and religion". When it comes to religion, some areas of the country are highly dominated with a particular religion and that affects the learning process in the university, although some are nationally felt. In Cases Alpha and Beta, religious stance is expressed and portrayed openly, affecting their learning and it is beyond management's control. For instance, some religions do not permit the interaction and engagement of their women in certain learning activities during certain periods, while some avoid interacting with gender of a particular status, and with that how can learning flow? It gets stuck; affecting the whole learning in the university, because it is obvious communication is incomplete and learning/knowledge of certain organisational members are not explored because of these beliefs. The Government also interferes with the learning in these universities by permitting religious and festive breaks making it compulsory and nationally observed by all universities. These breaks include Salah, Christmas, Easter and other religious breaks observed in the country. So as a cultural-cognitive element, the Government exercises its regulative control on religious element on all universities.

Historical Links

According to research findings, an organisation's history shapes its learning different from what Huber (1991) explained as "congenital learning". While congenital learning looks at what an organisation learns or intends to learn as crafted by its creator, historical link defines what and how learning of the university occurs based on its lifecycle. So in Case Alpha, it was evident that information processing dates back to the birth of the university, though still in use but a lot has changed following upcoming trends and also new ways of learning has emerged in the university, reflecting the

influence of history in their learning. Furthermore, it also shows that what and how learning occurs at present is driven by the past though with differences found because the university learns using better technologies and ways as compared to the archaic methods used before and this is evident in their line of operation.

6.4.2 ORGANISATIONAL ELEMENTS

6.4.2.1 Organisational culture

In accordance with the works of Bishop (2006), Cook and Yanow (1993), Joshep and Dai (2009), Perez-Lopez et al (2004) and Schein (1993), this research found that organisational culture shapes organisational learning in universities in different dimensions. Evidently, the culture of case universities appreciates and fosters communal relationship, which in turn promotes teamwork. This dimension of culture was found to be a natural trait without any push or effort simply because of the country's environment- Nigeria is a collective nation, which according to Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) is a cultural dimension where relationship and concern for others supersedes individualism. It is therefore established and arguable that national culture/environment influences the internal culture of organisations. As Daft (2008) identified that external environment determines and shapes organisational culture as opposed organisational culture driving external culture/environment. Because of the high appreciation for communal relationship, learning tends to flow/occur both formally and informally, with the informal strand more in use. Also this sense of community living encourages teamwork where organisational members find it easy to relate and interact thereby creating an atmosphere for learning, information processing arising from this culture as Garvin et al (2008) argue that organisational culture is one building block of organisational learning leading to a learning organisation.

Despite the existing communal relationship, these universities have a culture of operating based on instructions or initiatives or both depending on their management style. In Cases Alpha and Beta, working based on instructions is the lead game-it is a management led style-, considering their structures and high degree of Government interference, but organisational members are also encouraged to work on their initiatives in order to present their ideas and learning in the universities. Aside from

personal learning and developmental activities undertaken by organisational members, learning activities organised by the Government and the Schools also encourages the use of initiatives. It is expected that after engaging in Government or universities organized learning activities, organisational members present their experiences and findings drawing upon their understanding and implications to the universities, from where it is absorbed for application in the systems as driven by the management. This is what Martins and Martins (2002:63) described as idea generation where *“employees are encouraged to generate ideas, sell good ideas, management give credit for ideas and encourage the use of initiative to solve problems”*. In essence, instructions guide the learning paths of these universities, enabling them define their processes with purpose, and also the use of initiative to learn. Informally too, some organisational members in these universities use their initiatives in operating within the system but still within the scope of the universities. It is therefore obvious that the management/leadership style is highly authoritarian with certain aspects of democratic. For Case Cairo, the use of initiative is primarily encouraged and it operates an open door policy with lesser instructions in order to adhere to outlines of their objectives. This is believed to be so because of the universal purpose and nature of a university everywhere- to offer education. The autonomy to operate on initiative and represent the university offers Case Cairo the opportunity of learning and building its knowledge from diverse sources and with little limitation, and also from instructions as well. This depicts the management/leadership styles of Case Cairo as highly democratic and partnerlistic.

It is the long-lived culture of all three universities to train and develop their human resource as means of the universities learning, even in the youngest University-Case Cairo. Through training and development, these universities get to process information and learn directly from organisational member's experiences (retraining of other colleagues) and as part of the system (injecting knowledge acquired into the system), thereby promoting organisational learning. This dimension of culture only becomes disruptive to organisational learning when training and learning activities organised tend to be repetitive and without clear focus or improvement but just a wheel to fulfil all righteousness. In such situations, organisational members become demotivated and weak to learn which in turn inhibits the learning in the organisation, as posited by Noe et al (2010) that training and development influences organisational learning. This

depends on individual learning needs, interpersonal dynamics and the organisational climate which determines the engagement and motivation of organisational members to learn on behalf of their organisation or not.

6.4.2.2 Organisational structure

Similar to most organisations, the long established Universities-Cases Alpha and Beta operate a hierarchical (bureaucratic) structure which is highly centralised, clearly defining organisational responsibilities and functions, line of communication and pattern of decision making majorly driven by rules and procedures, across different organisational levels (Kanten et al 2015; Sutherland and Canwell 2004). And that is the pattern learning often takes in organisations with such structures, following a top-down or bottom-up approach or the both as the case may be. As explained by Martinez-Leon and Martinez-Garcia (2011: 543), *“Organisational structure also reflects the way in which information and knowledge is distributed within an organisation, which affects the efficiency of their utilization”*. But in the case of research universities, learning also occurs across organisational levels/functions with or without inter-relating with other levels and it still becomes “organisational”-experiencing the full organisational learning process/cycle- reflecting the uniqueness of universities structure when it comes to organisational learning.

While other studies (Curado 2006; Lam and Lundvall 2006; Mehrabi et al 2013) consider bureaucratic structure as an inhibitor of organisational learning, this study partially subscribes to that notion because the strict climate promotes organisational politics where certain individual interests are considered before others. In such situations, certain learning activities (like international learning programs) are access first by those belonging to influential caucus or friends to top management, thereby restricting and limiting the learning in the organisation. Amazingly, this research found that bureaucratic structure though rigid; it still fosters organisational learning by permitting the operation of committee system as a learning mechanism and a long-time organisational culture which encompasses members from different schools, departments and fields, thus encouraging cross functional setups and relationships: relating different organisational levels for learning. Organisational learning is influenced or facilitated here not because of the cross- departmental setup but because members of committees are usually allotted learning responsibilities from which they

carry out research and acquire relevant information for analysis, where cross fertilization of ideas and knowledge occurs for the organisation to learn. It is therefore sensible to state that bureaucracy not only permits learning in its own way but also teamwork. As Hao et al (2012) argued that highly specialised and centralised organisations promote organisational learning through high knowledge sharing and communication.

What is obtained in Case Cairo is a flat structure because of its age, which is quite strange in an educational setting most especially in a university. This structure is less rigid and open to change and learning because of its pre-matured structure having fewer middle managers. The structure promotes learning as a community because of its size alongside it tends to explore knowledge and learning as a guide towards building its structure. Consequently, this structure hampers organisational learning due to unclear definition of responsibilities only for those in academics. So learning in this university occurs without a clear acceptable pattern or process as found in Cases Alpha and Beta.

Uniformly, the three universities also operate an informal structure that shapes organisational learning differently from the formal structure. Informal structure was argued by case universities to enable learning more easily because it is flexible; an easy structure for building relationships and it is accessible by all without limitation; thus complementing Alberto and Fabio' (2010) argument. This structure in addition to promoting learning, grants organisational members the autonomy and more responsibilities with regards learning; and learning is better retained through this structure –it involves relating with colleagues, subordinates and superiors without formal boundaries. The structure is also considered the substitute for the rigid formal structure in place. Similar to what Martinez-Leon and Martinez-Garcia (2011) refer to as “organic structure”. Though, informal structure was found to also restrict learning as its sources of learning and information is likely to lack authenticity and acceptance organisationally because it is not formally intuited.

6.4.2.3 Learning strategy

In line with the findings of Hirsh (2005) Tippins and Sohi (2003), research universities identified that their learning purpose, environment, organisational culture and available resources drive their learning strategies. Some learning strategies are long-lived cultures of the universities, which are in constant use (for instance training and development), while others are subject to change depending on change and organisational demand. As Reilly (1998) argued that learning strategies are diverse in nature and are determined by the environment and need of the organisation. These learning strategies are either exploratory or exploitative. Explorative learning strategies of these universities include collaboration with HEIs and other organisations, research, training and development, SIWES and student competition clubs. For exploitation strategies, it covers past experiences, consulting the library, knowledge house and internal documentations. Even though explorative strategies are not daily and frequently utilized, exploitative strategies are part of the university, this is because of the nature and structure of universities where events and learning are likely to be repeated.

Explorative and exploitative strategies however shape organisational learning differently. For the former, it is believed to promote organisational learning in these universities because it creates a sense of individual and organisational discovery, which motivates them to learn more, similar to Mom et al (2007) findings. On the contrary, this strategy also limits learning because it is usually pursued by selected or opportune organisational members which others partake in the secondary path, and this to them is demotivating and curtails the desire to learn. In addition, this strategy is limited to exploring only applicable learning and knowledge- learning only useful to the organisation and not to the individual. To this end, Kirwan (2013) argued that an organisation learns more when individual learning is enhanced alongside the pursuit for organisational knowledge and development.

Exploitative learning strategies engage organisational members in learning, as it is not restrictive and accessible by all. It is understood that pursuing these strategies promotes organisational learning because its activities often portray some freshness-unique and new interpretation and understanding leading to learning. Also it offers the opportunity to revisit past learning and events likely to reoccur, giving them better

understanding on how to go about it in future; therefore, fostering organisational learning because organisational knowledge is in constant recycling for more and new learning. Exploitative strategies tend to negate organisational learning because of their stale nature, especially when learning materials and activities are not updated or improved to reflect environmental trend. Therefore, keeping the learning in the organisation backward, limiting what the organisation should learn as opined by Carroll (2012).

6.4.2.4 Organisational resources

Organisational resource is another element shaping organisational learning in research universities. This element is however inseparable from the organisational culture of the organisation as claimed by Osibanjo and Adeniji (2013:115) that *“organisational culture helps to provide opportunity and broad structure for the development of human resources, technical and behavioural skills in an organisation”*. In essence, the way resources are managed in an organisation to an extent is the function of organisational culture.

In developing countries like Nigeria, organisational resources stand as major influence to organisational activities and learning (Rasheed 2014; Santiago and Alcorta 2009), consequently reflecting the state of the nation. But learning however occurs in organisations found in the country, including universities. Universities resources range from human, financial, non-financial, growing technologies, tangible and intangible resources that either promote or hinder organisational learning. Human resource of Cases Alpha, Beta and Cairo are considered strategic, not only do they stem from diverse backgrounds and fields, they contribute to the functioning and management of other resources and the learning in the organisation itself- which is an important and unique resource. According to Mello (2015), Ranjbar and Absalan (2015) and this research, the development (the provision of training and other learning opportunities) and proper management (learning motivations, incentives) of human resources fosters organisational learning because it builds these resources intellectually and otherwise; in turn increasing the intangible resources of the university, while the absence of these provisions inhibits organisational learning. While the development and management of human resource is paramount for organisational learning and development, this research discovered that human resources of Case Universities strive to pursuit the learning in their organisations even in the midst of the politics or with little or no

provision of learning incentives all because they believe in sacrifice and the aim of building minds.

Aside human resource, financial resource is another determinant of organisational learning in universities. Financial resource surfaces more as a threat to learning in universities, most especially the Government-owned – Cases Alpha and Beta because they are highly sponsored and dependent on the Government. Learning becomes hindered when Government fails to meet the financial needs of these universities, which are usually demanded to provide conducive learning environment, even when they develop the human resource. Developing the human resources becomes insufficient for learning to occur without the provision of finances required to obtain learning equipment, technologies or materials as Liu et al (2012) and Wah (2013) stressed that providing adequate organisational resources can enhance learning in organisations. Although these universities tend to survive on donations made by external parties, alumni and internally generated funds, they also have developed their strategies of learning and surviving with limited financial resources so as not to disrupt the learning in their organisation. But when it becomes unbearable, it often results to strike, thereby distorting organisational learning.

Other notable resources shaping these universities learning include country specific resources like basic amenities. All universities, irrespective of type, feel this effect. Electricity is the obvious amongst others. Without electricity learning cannot occur because technologies (internet coverage) and other learning equipment cannot be operated and learning activities cannot be held in the dark. So this shapes learning in the universities directly or indirectly. Directly, lack of electricity shuts down the learning process because certain learning mechanisms involve the use of electronic media without which learning cannot occur. While indirectly, the cost associated with providing alternative electricity and internet access like generators and dongles is high which curtails some learning activities and operations of the universities in order to save costs: thus distorting learning. Notwithstanding, these universities learn in the midst of hardship. It is however arguable that these universities learn to learn with little availability of resources.

6.4.2.5 Organisational politics

Universities are democratic systems with politics dominating their decision making process (Cacciattolo 2013; Khan and Hussain 2014; Nejad et al 2011) which in turn shapes learning in the institutions. In Cases Alpha and Beta politics is the order of the day because of their structural makeup- the existence of committee systems. This structure to a large extent places high power of representation in the hands of few; enabling the members of the committee to either influence the learning process to suit the organisation, group or their personal interests. As Lawrence et al (2005) argue individual/ group interest impact on how learning occurs in organisations. The Senate is found to be the most influential committee in these universities that either stars or mars the learning process in the university. In addition, the political influence exerted by this committee varies as it relates to learning. The senate fosters organisational learning by using their influence to offer organisational members the opportunity to engage in learning activities from where they relate their experiences, knowledge and ideas to the system for absorption, as it is relevant to them. Also most members of the committee are members of unions who fight to promote the learning activities and learning conditions of the universities, thus promoting organisational learning. Negatively, the committee is made up of a certain calibre of people who consider themselves “the Kings” of the university who must be consulted for learning to occur if not the learning process becomes distorted. This is similar to what Hayes (2014) refers to as “blockers” who stand in the way of learning and change and have to be lured or pleased to become supporters for organisational change and learning to happen. Also this committee exercise their power based on relationship ties where they allocate certain organisational members- the favoured ones- the opportunity of engaging in certain learning activities above others because of their friendship and relationship ties. This however hinders organisational learning because only selected organisational members engage in learning activities due to political influences in the universities.

6.4.3 Other Elements

Several locational elements shaping organisational learning were identified in case universities. **Power supply** was mentioned as an element shaping the learning in these organisations, as the process requires the use of some electronic functions to enable the flow of information. The availability and constant supply of electricity enables the

universities undertake learning activities and utilize OLMs; while its disruption hampers the flow of information, thereby obstructing learning. In essence, power supply is essential for learning as noted by Brown (2001:1) *“power supply assumes a very unique role within a typical system, in many respects, it is the mother of the system. It gives the system life”*.

Security threats/ issues among others stem as an inhibiting element of organisational learning, simply because the occurrence of threats like the terrorist attacks experienced in the Northern region halts the entire operation of the system, affecting their learning process. Aside terrorism, other security threats arise from cultural differences and activities, which is prevalent in Case Beta. Terrorism as a shaper of organisational learning differs from terrorism learning which entails acquiring knowledge about how terrorist groups learn and operate (Jackson 2005; Kenney 2009) and not how their activities affect the learning in organisations. **The Nigerian economy** emerged as another element shaping the learning in universities as Brennan et al (2004) depicts that an economy is reflected by its HEIs, and HEIs are true reflections of the economy as well. The Nigerian economy tends to shape in relation to basic amenities, facilities and resources required by Case universities for learning. For Cases Alpha and Beta, the reflection of the economy is seen in Government contributions towards their operations and existence; while for Case Cairo, the proprietors are responsible for providing for resources with or without Government’s provision, as they are non-dependent on Government. **Universities location** is another element. On a positive note, the location of the universities away from city centre provides the serenity for learning with little interference, whereas their being situated in local areas presents them as prey to local inhabitants whose militant actions stand as distortion to their operations and learning. Finally, an internal element introduced is **performance appraisal**. Performance appraisal is understood to promote organisational learning in Case Cairo because it fosters reflection and the provision of feedback with measures for improvement, enabling organisational members and the organisation learn. Similar to the understanding of Huber (2014) that employee appraisal enables organisational learning as it guides their future path based on past performance. The table below highlights the interpreted similarities and differences in the context of this study:

Table 6.1 Comparison of this present empirical study and extant literature on elements shaping OL

Element level	Elements	Extant Literature Similarities	This study's findings
Environmental Elements	Government regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The regulative elements stem from obligation, precision or delegation and ensure conformity, which is subject to sanction. The primary mechanism of such control involves coercion. This element shapes organisational behaviour Scott (2008: 2014), Abbott et al (2001), Xu & Shenkar (2002), Bruton et al (2010), North (1991), Aguilera et al (2004), Dimaggio & Powell (1983), Doyle (2012), Hult (2003), Hoffman (1999), Kshetri (2010), Hirsch (1997). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This element shapes OL in case universities differently depending on the level of Government control. For instance, in Case Alpha the Federal Government controls and regulates the institution and its internal activities. While in Case Beta, Both Federal and State Government interfere with their operations. Aside Government and its third parties, regulations of private universities are set by the board- made up of mainly external bodies.
	Trade union membership /actions	Arises from empirical finding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a pure normative element with regulative strand as members as expected to adhere to regulations guiding the union. This element shapes the learning in public universities.
	Competition or cooperation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These elements are normative and they shape learning in organisations. Organisations' cooperation with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universities learn from other organisations not only their types. Public universities compete for research grants not market.

		<p>other organisations through partnership or other forms of networking is driven by the idea no organisation possess all capacities to achieve its goal in the market.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation is a forum for learning and managing competition • Organisations compete for market acceptance Harman (2008), Apperbaym & Gallagher (2000), Frey (2008), Farrukh & Waheed (2015), Inkpen (1997:2000), Huang (2010), Gebrekidan & Awuah (2002), Albani & Dietz (2009), Conteh (2013) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A unique form of competition exist in public universities where students compete for acceptance into the universities
	Institutional autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisations freedom to be self-governed shapes their learning. • Different decisions made or taken by organisations shapes learning differently Laegreid et al (2008), Collier (2002), Lorsuwannarat (2007), Verhoest et al (2004), Bettis-Outland (2012), Schuck (2000). 	No issues
	Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual/national culture defines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse cultural orientations present the

		<p>organisational members' beliefs, ideologies and cognitive framework.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture shapes the learning in organisation as organisations learn through their members. • Compliance occurs in different situations and the justification behind conformity is that of orthodoxy Scott (2001:2008); Bruton et al (2010), Yeh (2007), Jepperson & Swidler (1994), Trevino et al (2008), Xu & Shenkar (2002), Lee & Pan (2014) 	<p>uniqueness of OL in these universities. This is reflected in how information is interpreted taking into consideration different cultural perspectives in these universities.</p>
	<p>a) Community service</p> <p>b) Religion</p> <p>c) Historical links</p>	Empirical findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other environmental elements shaping organisational learning in universities
Organisational Elements	Organisational culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational culture shapes organisational learning through its dimension such as communal relationship, teamwork, management/leadership style, diversity, availability of resources, capacity building Uma (2011), Som et al 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to findings, communal relationship is a natural trait beyond organisational culture but a reflection of national culture.

		(2010), Kodjo & Changjun (2009), Chang & Lee (2007), Salas & Glinow (2007), Azadi et al (2013), Lopez et al (2004), Martins & Martins (2002), Comas (2014), Carmeli et al (2009), Martins & Terblanche (2003), Skerlavaj et al (2010).	
	Organisational structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different organisational structures shape organisational learning differently; this is also dependent on the organisational culture, decision making and communication processes and practices in place Hao et al (2012), Kantan et al (2015), Curado (2006), Martinez-Leon & Martinez-Garcia (2011), Dauber et al (2012), Dicle & Okan (2015), Ravangard et al (2014), Su & McNamara (2012), Cohendet & Llerena (2001), Choe (2004). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureaucracy promotes learning and teamwork in universities • The existence of flat structure in private university (Case Cairo) tends to limit learning because of unclear definition of responsibilities.
	Learning strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning strategy is driven by purpose, organisational aim and objectives and the availability of resources. • Additionally, different types of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration in case universities limits OL because it is based on selective involvement, where few organisational members engage in certain learning activities due

		<p>strategies shape learning differently Goodyear et al (2006), Beer et al (2005), March (1991), Hirsh (2005), Niazi (2011), Cosmas (2014), Hanaki & Owan (2013), O'Malley & Chamot (1995), Bersin (2013), O'Reilly & Tushman (2014), Tippins & Sohi (2003)</p>	<p>to political influences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploitation is the basic learning strategy of these universities.
	Organisational resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources are classified differently from human, technical, financial, tangible and intangible resources. • Both individual and combined resource(s) shape learning in organisations. • Certain resources are operated and produced by other forms of resources. For instance, technology as a resource is operated as a tool by human resource in producing other resources like knowledge and other intangible resources Aragon et al (2014), Gilanina et al (2013), Lopez et al (2006), Garvin et al (2008), Kraatz & Zajac (2001), Berkhout et al (2004), Wicker & 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate provisions of resources in Cases Alpha and Beta result in trade union related actions and industrial strike. This is because these public universities are members of trade unions and they are dependent on Government for their funding and resources.

		Breuer (2013), Julienti et al (2010), Yin-nor (2015), Lopez-Cabrales et al (2011), Wah (2013), Osibanjo & Adeniji (2013), Jin & Lee (2012), Ployhart & Schneider (2012), Sisaye & Birnberg (2012), Duncan (2004)	
	Organisational politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational politics shapes organisational learning due to numerous existing interests of organisational members. Each attribute of politics shapes learning uniquely Cooper & Burgoyne (2000), Ferdinand (2004), Lawrence et al (2005), Ferris et al (1996), Bauer & Erdogan (2012), Ahmad & Lemba (2010), Faye & Long (2014), Poon (2004), Singh (2012), Tirelli (2011). 	No issues
Other elements	a) Power supply b) Security threats c) Locations of universities d) State of the economy	Empirical findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These are country context elements shaping organisational learning in universities. 	Not applicable

	e)Performance appraisal		
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How these elements either enables or distorts learning in case universities is summarised and further categorised in **Appendix 6**.

Other Findings

As part of the study, the researcher asked for interviewees' additional contribution with regards to organisational learning in universities. Generally organisational members of Case Alpha frowned at the way information processing is done. They mentioned that certain phases were not satisfactory due to management lapses. Examples of such lapses include partial involvement of staff in the process of learning in the university-from start to finish- because of the complex nature of the organisation. The staff identified this as a major influence in learning which ends up creating blockages and problems because players were bypassed and only involved in certain areas. Furthermore, there was a general notion by organisational members that organisational learning was taken for granted in the university but it is critical. Obviously, a key player expressed:

"Organisational learning is one aspect I think the developing nations are not taking serious at the moment and we need to look at it very critical because it is very important hitherto we have always thought that our responsibility is just to get students to learn and learn and learn and lecturers just do their work and that is it but I think increasingly with technology and what we see in other parts of the world young people can be very creative and they can bring in new ideas that can change things so it is not only that we are teaching them but we are also listening to them we want to learn from them the system wants to learn from them so that the system can improve, can change if there are things we do in particulars ways before there might be new ways of doing them and if there are suggestions then the system must be receptive to those ideas, try them out and see how they impact the system that way the system continues to grow and reinvent itself so to say for greater performance ultimately if the system does not allow itself to kind of reflect on itself and try to change then it stiffens its own level of performance and service delivery at the end of the day there will be no improvement in the end product so I think organisational learning is a two way learning situation where members of the organisation are learning from the organisation as much as the organisation is learning from members of the organisation that will collectively move the organisation forward" (RA4).

While in Case Beta, respondents depict organisational learning as a key practice for every organisation although not an easy task to do because of likely challenges. They reasoned organisational learning is necessary due to uncertain forces driving public, private and

service industries, demanding organisations to learn beyond their comfort zone and boundaries in order to sustain their existence in the global market. This was explained:

“Learning is a life time thing and it’s something that evolves over time and the structure we put in place can either make the system work well or mar the system to death. Once an organisation has put in place an environment that encourages people to look for knowledge I’m sure naturally the goals of the organisation will be achieved” (RB2)

For Case Cairo organisational learning was generally regarded as a to-do activity for a university not minding how old or new the institution is. Key players contributed that organisational learning is the responsibility of everyone operating in a setting and as long as the individuals share the organisation’s dreams. Other staff said learning should not be only for challenging times but for all seasons because learning gives the organisation diverse meaning of its existence. While the student representative made mention of the potentials of learning as a whole. The representative expressed that organisational learning is strength and a transaction to be processed by all in the university.

6.5 CONCLUDING DISCUSSION AND SUMMARIES

Reflecting on Popper and Lipshitz (1998) clarification of “learning in organisations” to explain the functions, procedures and interaction in organisations for the aim of learning. It has been realised that universities investigated in this research foster learning on all levels but this varies according to universities due to their differences and the existence of elements which are summarised below

Table 6.2 Comparison between Case Universities

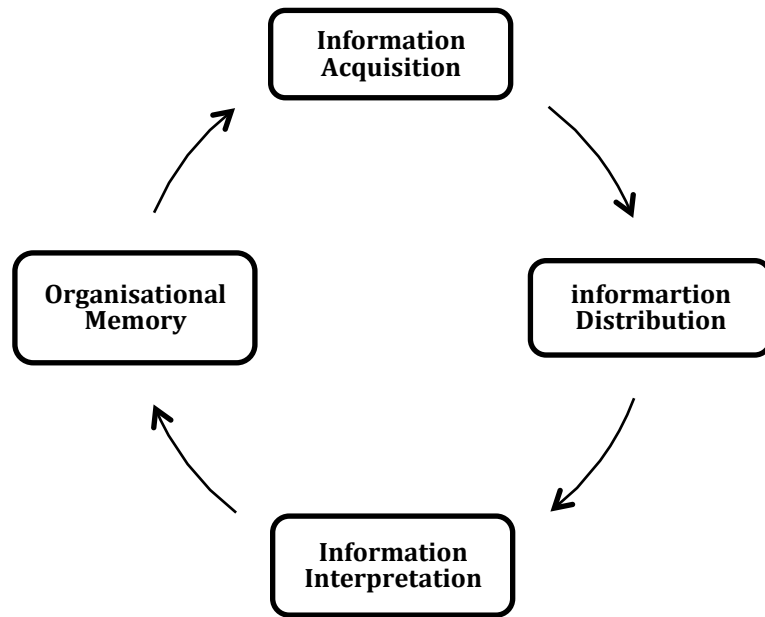
ASE ALPHA	ASE BETA	ASE CAIRO
A long and well established university whose working environment is quite formal but organisational members have their ways of relaxing the tension informally.	Equally established but lesser formally operated as compared to Case Alpha.	A new and unclear university environment- exhibiting formal and informal features. Organisational members follow protocols and they operate an open and accessible system.
Interaction here occurs more between members of the same level than with other levels	Interaction is more fluid across different levels but with light restrictions as it regards respect for superior levels.	Interaction in the university is non-restrictive and they operate an open door policy.
Has a long history and culture of learning and decision making through information	Also has a history and culture of learning and decision making through information	Engage in information processing to learn and make decisions but the structure is

rocessing. The university operates OLMs in learning: some static and others subject to change.	rocessing. The university learns with the use of OLMs.	ot solidly formed as compared to the two public universities.
earning here occurs in both organised and unintentional ways, mostly following defined patterns with less one willingly free.	earning in this university is very similar to that of Case alpha except for rare cases that it differs.	earning here is quite open because the system is still receptive to ideas and changes in building its structure.

Although the three cases are operating in the educational sector, providing services to national and international students, recruiting them within the same framework and operating according to similar policies and strategies, the three contexts are dissimilar in terms of operations, structures, approaches and ambience.

Learning through information processing was found to be an effortless and well understood process carried out by all levels of the universities- together or at different levels. Only for the presence of certain loopholes which organisational members in certain situations learn to utilize to their own advantage and other times work with them. During data collection, participants were speaking in similar ways and at a point, the researcher could predict their responses. When the researcher later revisited the literature, Huber (1991) and Dixon (1999) arguments about “information interpretation” and “meaning structures” became evident that case universities have managed to develop shared knowledge, learning and experience and are bound by this commonly held meaning that are stored not only in individual minds but in other organisational artefacts (procedures, stories). In order to facilitate the investigation of research, theoretical lens were used, specifically the framework of Huber (1991)

Figure 6.1 Theoretical Lens for Organisational Learning Investigation



Source: Based on Huber (1991:90)

Drawing on the argument of Popper and Lipshitz (2000:185), learning can become organisational when;

- the experiences and knowledge of individuals are shared and analysed by other organisational members.
- And this experiences/ knowledge becomes that of the entire organisation through dissemination to different organisational units, and it is embedded in their operating procedures.

In this sense, it is evident that case universities have mechanisms not only for information acquisition but to share organisational members experiences and knowledge in order to embed them into organisational memory through journals, publications, manuals, documentations and more. In essence, organisational members of case universities act as learning agents on behalf of their organisations. All three universities use organisational mechanisms which have been observed in addition to their organisational memory that captures patterns in terms of learning lessons, amendments in procedures, decisions, guidelines, communications through electronic and manual platforms which matches the descriptions of Popper and Lipshitz (2000). This is summarised in a table below:

Table 6.3 Information processing revisited

Process	Observation from data
Information acquisition	<p>Intentional: found evident through formal education and the organised sources of learning from both the internal and external environment. Some sources of information are utilised with an aim or expectancy of just learning or achieving a positive outcome.</p> <p>Unintentional: learning here is triggered by controlling authorities of these universities with the universities having little or no say but to engage in the learning. Learning arises unintentionally here also due to never occurring events in these locations like the terrorist activities, thus driving change in the universities. Additionally, certain mechanisms are designed and operated specifically for this stage, with some arising as the information is obtained. Also this stage is found to go beyond individual level to a group level.</p>
Information distribution	<p>The connection between individual/group based learning and organisational learning forms here, evidently when information or knowledge acquired from whatever source is distributed through designed processes, structures or persons (OLMs) beyond an individual either before or after obtaining an organisational interpretation depending on the type of information.</p>
Information interpretation	<p>The use of committee systems, pally and other interactive forums proves that “organisational interpretation” occurs when organisational members of the universities inquire, question, challenge and filter in interaction with one another in an effort to produce organisational learning.</p> <p>Additionally, as more and more interpretations or views are developed from distributed information with the aim of contributing these views towards building common meaning.</p>
Organisational memory	<p>Elements of organisational memory and common patterns of behaviour have been witnessed throughout Case Universities, some of which are accessible off campus by third parties. Distinctly, the rare function of unlearning occurs at this stage as against the</p>

	interpretation stage. Despite this difference, learning mechanisms of these universities have formed and complemented other stages of the process; in fact they overlap and integrate other stages.
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Although generalizing from case study universities could be impractical, some key findings and conclusions drawn from this research may contribute to the field of OL within the higher education domain.

6.5.1 OLMs as institutionalised learning structures, procedures or more?

Organisational learning should be considered and investigated as a social process as social interactions occur in and during the operation of OLMs through diverse interpretations of information and representation of knowledge as well as exchange. These interactions however do not exist uniformly or as a single process in these universities, but as a “system” of institutionalised social arrangements. In essence, organisational learning in these universities is dependent on the interaction between and among the academic, non-academic and student arms. Also universities unique makeup and organisational structure enables different forms of learning interactions. To this end, it can be argued that the special features of universities reinforce social learning processes.

This study supports the existence of and the capacity for learning through institutionalized structures and procedures such as classroom education/meetings, meetings, pally, club engagements that revolve around organisational information processing in three universities- Cases Alpha, Beta and Cairo. The mechanisms identified in these universities have different frequencies of operation. Some were operated on daily basis (classroom education/meeting); some monthly (departmental/faculty meetings; training and developmental course) and others were in use less frequently (trade union, town hall meeting and pally). Data revealed that classroom meeting/education occurs daily but the mode of operation tends to differ across three universities. What is most important is that this mechanism like other identified mechanisms enabled clients and operators cooperate, acquire information and develop a shared understanding together. OLMs provide Case universities the opportunity to define their places and moments for processing information collectively,

similar to the findings of Lipshitz and Popper (2000), Schechter and Feldman (2010) and Schechter (2005). Through these OLMs, information considered relevant for use is acquired, distributed, interpreted, stored and retrieved in these universities. For instance, town hall meetings, training and pally offered mechanism involving collective learning among organisational members of different levels, during which they share and analyse information, define implementation route (if the need be) and future learning agendas. Thus reflecting the idea that “learning and functions require structure” (Popper and Lipshitz 2000; Schechter and Feldman 2010), as learning is a process. However, these universities define mechanisms beyond structures and procedures to “resources”. Resources in this aspect, support and mediate the acquisition, distribution, interpretation, storage and the use of information in universities from individual to group level to organisational level; thus serving as means of facilitating organisational learning. This therefore calls for the redefinition of learning mechanisms beyond structures and procedures to “what is applicable, acceptable and in use in organisations”.

6.5.2 The role of organisational and environmental elements in OL

According to Popper and Lipshitz, although OLMs are necessary for learning, these mechanisms are likely to produce beneficial outcomes for the organisation when aligned with learning culture which are defined by five elements (continuous learning, transparency, issue orientation, accountability and valid information). This study however identifies the role of other organisational and environmental elements beside “culture” in understanding learning in universities. Similar to the findings of Oliver (2009), this study argues that the organisational culture in universities defines the use of OLMs but other internal elements such as structure, resources, learning strategy and politics determine the types and forms of OLMs operated in the university setting; and also whether OLMs would produce meaningful outcome or not. Additionally, external elements were found to shape the operation of OLMs in these universities as well. For instance, the use and operation of certain OLMs in universities were driven by normative attitude in attempt to mimic or operate similarly with other universities. Therefore, in understanding learning in organisations, it is relevant to take into consideration OLMs, organisational and environmental elements as complementary attributes for learning.

Another important role of organisational learning elements identified in this study is that of leadership. This research proposes that internal (administrators) and external (Government and NUC) leadership shapes the operation of OLMs. Therefore the role of leadership is relevant in understanding organisational learning in universities. Administrators according to Schechter and Tischler (2007) are central in the operation of mechanisms and the implementation of lessons learnt. While externally, they are major players in defining and establishing the environment necessary for learning in the universities. Universities are known to operate hierarchical and bureaucratic models which often affect their ability to learn collectively. Universities therefore require leadership that is all about developing shared meanings and learning together. Administrators need to encourage collective thinking and participation in universities (among and within organisational members) by developing the skills and ability to listen, inquire and reflect together, rather than controlling the learning process alone (Higgins et al 2012; Hsiao & Chang 2011; Garvin 1993).

6.5.3 Universities as unit of analysis for OL

OLMs represent universities structures, attributes, procedures, resources and knowledge distribution throughout the whole university and not confined to a particular level or a central knowledge system like the “top management”. In light of universities unique set-up, goals and pedagogy, continuous interaction and cooperation is required between different members of the organisation (lecturers, administrators and students) for learning to occur. OLMs can therefore facilitate the learning process among and within different levels, faculties and departments. Additionally, data gathered from cases identifies OLMs, environmental and organisational elements as inseparable aspects of learning in organisations.

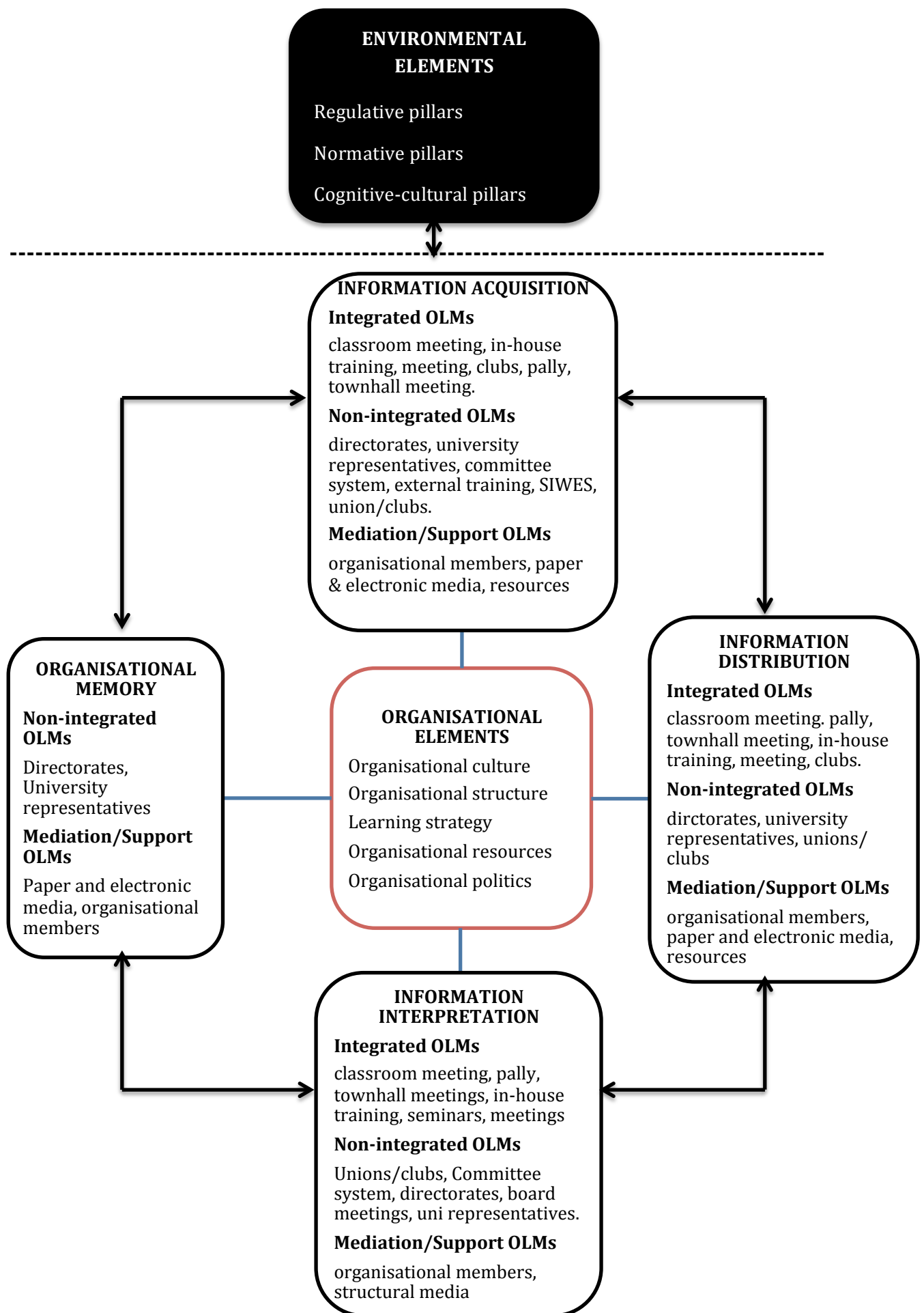
In conclusion, this study subscribes to the argument of Kars-Unluoglu and Easterby-Smith (2011: 15) that *“not having any structured OLMs almost guarantees no organisational learning. The mere existence of OLMs does not guarantee beneficial or productive learning outcomes”* rather an organisational effort or system which enables the sharing of information and knowledge across and between departmental and organisational level. This system provides and fosters an open and supportive learning

environment where formal and informal exchanges of information and knowledge occur. In addition to OLMs and organisational effort, this study gathered that learning in case universities could be defined and shaped by organisational and environmental elements.

6.6 THEORETICAL LENSES FOR ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING RESEARCH

In consideration of the above conclusion, the theoretical frame is revisited presenting how organisational learning is facilitated with the use of OLMs and also the environmental and organisational elements that either enable or inhibit OL as discussed above

Figure 6.2 Theoretical Lenses for Organisational Learning Investigation.



CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMEDATION

7.0 INTRODUCTION

This research study sets out to explore organisational learning in a developing country. The study investigated organizational learning mechanisms and elements shaping organizational learning in three universities in Nigeria. Following an extensive analysis using directed content analysis and using a frame of reference developed from the literature to make sense of data collected, this study concludes that organizational learning is a social and contextual process defined by learning mechanisms and elements existing within and outside the organization that shapes the process.

In this final chapter, answers to the research questions are presented and how the study has achieved its outlined theoretical and empirical objectives. The chapter also presents the theoretical and practical implications/contributions to knowledge of the study. This is followed by a discussion of the limitations of the present study, with recommendations for further studies in these areas to minimise the limitations. In conclusion, the study establishes the relationship between OLMs and elements shaping OL thus highlighting an existing relationship between two domains- OL and institutional theory.

7.1 ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING IN UNIVERSITIES

Several authors claim, “intentional learning is the focal process in the lives of scientists and educators” (Huber, 1991:88). This is because they consider learning as an intentional and formal process aimed at improving effectiveness or achieving some sort of organisational outcome. To Argyris and Schon (1978), Foil and Lyles (1985) and Yang (2007) organisational learning is made evident when organisational effectiveness is enhanced. It is true that educators and case universities of this research learn with the intention of building minds and educating students but not sufficiently in pursuit of organisational effectiveness or performance. Learning in universities also occur unintentionally and unplanned. This was made clear by respondents that the university is an environment where teaching and learning (education) are the core function of the

institution, so the organisation and its members get to learn in the course of educating even when they do not desire too; and this finding falls in line with those of Bower and Hilgard (1981), March and Olsen (1979), Jacko et al (2011) and Robey et al (2000). Yang (2007) and Argote (2013) also argued that intentional learning is likely to produce a visible change to confirm the effectiveness or the outcome of the organisation's learning. But this has not always been the case in case universities. It was evident that in situation of information processing pertaining unintended and sensitive issues like the security threat and crisis found in Cases Alpha and Beta, cautionary devices and adjustments are introduced to curb the situations. While in moments where these universities intentionally acquire information to process for organisational operations and use, the behaviour of the university most times does not change rather updates occur at individual cognitive systems and the organisational memory without visibly changing the operations of the universities or their designs. This however reflects Friedlander (1983:194) and Huber's (1991:89) explanations of learning not necessarily resulting in a physical change: *"change resulting from learning need not be visibly behavioural. Learning may result in new and significant insights and awareness that dictates no behavioural change. In this sense the crucial element in learning is that the organism be consciously aware of differences and alternatives and have consciously chosen one of these alternatives. The choice may not to reconstruct behaviour but, rather to, change one's cognitive maps or understanding"*. This also complements the understanding of Argyris and Schon's single-loop learning, which *"involves the production of matches, or the detection and correction of mismatches, without change in the underlying governing policies or values,"* (Argyris, 1983:116).

Case universities therefore learn intentionally and unintentionally with or without a change in behaviour- an outcome- but through the process of information/knowledge acquisition, distribution, interpretation, storage and retrieval of organisational knowledge. This process is continuous and it involves the interaction and exchange between different phases and levels through the use of mechanisms (structural and procedural arrangements). Similar to the notion of Dixon (1992: 32) *"rather than being sequential, organisational learning elements appear to be continuous and to have an interaction effect upon each other"*. Case universities were found to learn through organisational members or units that process information on different levels and on

behalf of the organisation; thus proving the assumption *“an organisation learns something even if not every one of its components learn that something”* (Matsuo, 2005:28). For instance, respondents of Cases Alpha and Beta confirmed that directorates and key players are assigned the function of consulting with sister and other HEIs, thereby enabling them process information on behalf of the whole system. While in all three universities, it was established that both staff and students acquire information and learn on behalf of their institutions through their engagement in classroom meetings, trainings, quizzes, internship, pally/town hall meetings. Although these arrangements and forums enable interaction, knowledge exchange and learning in Case universities, elements in the internal and external environments of universities shape learning in these universities by determining what information is acquired, the mechanisms to operate and those involved in the process; thereby reflecting how these elements foster or inhibit learning in universities. For instance, the operation of mechanisms like classroom meetings differ across the public universities (Cases Alpha and Beta) and the private university and this is driven by the decisions of universities establishing bodies and the era of universities establishment. In Cases Alpha and Beta, classroom meetings involve the formal lecture format and that is how learning and knowledge exchange occurs, while in case Cairo, the classroom meeting follows a three-way pattern- lectures, seminars and interactive sessions; modelling their classroom operations to what is currently practiced in most international universities. While internally, the use of committee systems in processing information and as learning mechanisms mirrors the organisational culture of universities. External elements shaping Case universities include Government policies, trade unions, institutional cooperation, competition, culture, and religion. While the internal elements are: the culture of the organisation, structure, learning strategy, politics and organisational resources. Other locational elements (power supply, terrorism, state of the economy) unique to the country context have also been identified to shape- to either foster or inhibit- learning in universities. It is therefore argued in this study that learning in universities- whether intentional or unintentional- is a social and situated process defined by learning mechanisms in place and the elements both within and external the organisation shaping the process of learning. Future studies, should therefore consider these contributory attributes-OLMs and elements shaping OL- in investigating and developing a holistic view/understanding of OL either as a process or outcome. Being

that OLMs facilitates learning in organisations and elements define how learning becomes beneficial as an outcome; or how learning is shaped as a process.

7.2 ACHIEVING THE AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS RESEARCH

A number of conclusions have been reached with regards this study's objectives. In fulfilling the first objective, literature revealed that organisational learning begins at the individual level or with individuals intuiting (Crossan et al, 1999) or detecting a form of variation in their operation which they sort to correct (Argyris and Schon, 1978), or from acquiring knowledge from both internal and external sources. This acquired knowledge is then shared with other organisational members, enabling them access people's experiences, which leads to the criticism or questioning of knowledge with the aim of developing a common organisational understanding. This Crossan et al (1999) referred to as integrating where individuals/ group members create shared meaning; thereby shifting from individual level learning to group level learning. After obtaining a common interpretation, this knowledge is then stored in organisational memory and replicated and institutionalised in the routines, programs and practices of the organisation for use by organisational members and the learning cycle continues, reflecting learning at the organisational level. Organisational learning in this perspective is seen as a continuous process that presents the interplay (relationship) between individual, group and organisational levels.

The second objective was achieved by investigating how organisations facilitate OL. According to Drach-Zahavy and Pud (2010); Lipshitz et al (2007); Popper and Lipshitz (1998) organisations facilitate their learning through the use of organisational learning mechanisms which are structural and procedural arrangements enabling the processing of information in organisations. Similarly, Cirella et al (2016) argue that these arrangements are structural, procedural and cognitive mechanisms facilitating learning in organisations. In consideration of the above, a typology of OLMs developed from the literature was utilised for investigation in selected universities where five of these classes of OLMs are evident to be in existence and operated to facilitate organisational learning and further classes of OLMs found in Case universities have been presented.

Finally, elements shaping organisational learning were investigated in fulfilment of the third objective, it was gathered that these elements exist within and outside the

organisation, and shaping how universities learn organisationally. This objective also highlights the relationship between OL and institutional theory. It was found that both conceptual and theoretical redundancies exist between these two bodies of knowledge. Institutional theory complements theories of OL because organisations operate in environments (external) with elements that exert pressures, norms and offer opportunities; and organisations on the other hand impose and create elements (internal) in the course of their functioning which in turn drives and determines the behaviour of organisations and so their learning.

The analysis of case universities provides significant contributions to theory and practice of OL. Considering objective two- mechanisms facilitating organisational learning- a classification was developed which can be used as basis for further studies as well as providing useful insight and analytical tool for organisational leaders. While the third objective present points that can be noted by researchers and organisations in organisational learning. These implications are discussed below.

7.3 RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

7.3.1 IMPLICATION FOR THEORY

This study found that organisational learning as a process initiated and undertaken by individuals and different organisational units for the aim of organisational functioning can be expounded by two contributory and inseparable attributes- organisational learning mechanisms and organisational environments- internal and external. This study utilised Huber' (1991) information processing model to understand OL. That is, it investigated how learning is facilitated in universities? What and how environmental and organisational elements shape learning in selected universities? What Huber's model has provided is a rationale behind learning resulting in cognitive change and not necessarily an observable change. In organisations, this learning is a process involving the interaction between the individual, group and organisational levels through four linked stages, which results in the development or increase of organisational knowledge base. What this study contributes to the utilisation of Huber's model in the study of OL is extending the knowledge in order to understand how individual learning becomes organisational by looking at what Popper and Lipshitz (1998) called organisational learning mechanisms as structural and procedural arrangements facilitating learning in

organisations. This study however found that besides structural and procedural arrangements, resources are also considered as mechanisms in selected universities as they also facilitate organisational learning in these organisations. This finding is a variation of the discussion in the field about OLMs that they are basically structural and procedural. This view has been labelled faulty, as findings provide insights into accepting the definition and use of OLMs based on what is applicable and obtainable in organisations. This study therefor contributes to knowledge on OLMs facilitating OL both theoretically and empirically, therefore supporting the proposition of Boyce (2003), Cirella et al (2016) Kar-Unluoglu and Easterby-Smith (2011), Lines (2005), Schechter and Feldman (2011) that learning in organisation is better understood through the examination of OLMs; thus the need for more empirical studies.

For Huber (1991), while individuals or organisational members initiate learning by acquiring information/knowledge from within and outside their organisation for organisational processing, this model failed to consider the role or influence of the internal and external environment on the learning process of organisations. In attempt to manage this limitation, this study examined the role of the internal and external environment on OL by questioning what and how environmental and organisational elements shape OL in selected universities. In investigating these elements, the study highlights the relationship between two distinct bodies of knowledge- OL and institutional theory- as suggested by Bapuji and Crossan (2004) that OL and institutional theory share an affinity which if explored would present the intersection between OL and organisational theory. This study however establishes the intersection, arguing that organisational learning and institutional theory are integrated and can be considered inseparable in understanding the dynamics of learning and the operation of OLMs in organisations. OL can be seen as a holistic process involving the individual and organisational aspects and functions in the management of information for organisational purpose, while “institutions” are elements, attributes, bodies and traits that define the learning in organisations. For learning in organisations to be complete, organisations must take into consideration those elements (institutions) existing within and outside the organisation that either complements or distorts organisational learning. As it stands, OL and institutional theory are interwoven, having an integrating and complimentary relationship as opined by Bapuji and Crossan (2004). In addition to

environmental and organisational elements shaping organisational learning, this study also identifies context specific elements shaping OL, presenting how they either foster or distort OL in universities.

The research identifies other aspects to consider as it relates to organisational learning in universities:

- Some researchers argue that universities are complex and can hardly learn as “organisations”. But the reality is that organisational learning does occur in universities and practiced by universities just like other organisations but this is defined by their unique learning mechanisms, organisational and environmental elements.
- The use of OLMs is a clear reflection of the universities culture. Additionally, it was gathered that though these mechanisms are natural and established, they are never systematic in implementation simply because of surrounding elements within and outside the universities.
- Understanding the use of OLMs in the three universities is determined to an extent by the existence of the universities (Age).
- It was observed that some OLMs in these universities constitute the elements shaping organisational learning. For instance, visitation and consultation as non-integrated OLMs that facilitates OL is also a normative element.
- Though organisational learning is an internal process in universities, this process is highly shaped by environmental elements like Government policies, religion, culture, cooperation, and competition, trade union as they are being tolerated and considered beyond the organisation itself, only in the case of the private university which is managed.

7.3.2 IMPLICATION FOR PRACTICE

The discussion of findings has given rise to implications for universities and organisational leaders for improving learning in their organisations. Universities and other organisations leaders can exercise a democratic system as it relates to learning. This effort will not only motivate and encourage equality and participation but it will also build a supportive and conducive learning environment where organisational members are eager to learn, create awareness and improve the organisational system.

This can be best achieved by ensuring that organisational members participate and engage in learning as a community, because in communities organisational members can interact and exchange knowledge which enables them create common understanding (Dixon, 1999). This participation therefore propagates organisational members combining their distinct levels of understanding to create organisational knowledge.

Universities and other organisations should also consciously make organisational members aware of their learning process and mechanisms, either through periodic publications or through learning forums like seminars. Creating this awareness can provide a ground for decision making on how best to foster learning in organisations and; can lead to designing learning mechanisms at workplace while taking note of the environment as well (Apostolou, 2014).

Another implication for universities is that they should also consider curtailing/managing cultural/religious traits disrupting their learning. Curtailing this can help universities manage certain effects of environmental elements within their control, by restricting organisational members (through established policies) from religious involvement during learning cycles and activities to enable the organisations tap the full contributions/potentials of organisational members. Furthermore, the universities should invest in and develop checks and balances to guide their learning process and use of mechanisms, which will help them in identifying loopholes in the process and possible measures for improvement. This in turn could foster learning in the organisation as Olivieri et al (2013) argue that the existence of checks and balances in the learning process of organisations support their learning.

7.4 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study like other studies, is not without limitations. Some of the methodological issues have been presented in Chapter four. However, the main limitations of this study includes:

The common limitation of a qualitative study: The issue of accepting the traditional standards of validity and reliability- was experienced in this research, but through Denzin and Lincoln (2000) strategies for establishing research validity and reliability

(Chapter four) the researcher clearly discussed how research rigor was achieved using these strategies.

Too much data: The amount of data collected during field study may have resulted in information overload and overweighting, leading to possible missing of key information due to the researcher's concentration on particular areas rather than others which may be relevant (Saunders et al 2007). The researcher tackled this weakness by transcribing and classifying responses and themes as they relate to research questions (as seen in chapters five and six) in order to reduce the risk of losing important information.

Scope of study: Considering the scope of this study- the mechanisms and elements shaping organisational learning in selected universities, the study fails to cover other aspects like the outcomes of organisational learning, learning organisation due to the complexity of the topic and also the level of research on OL in universities, especially in developing nations. But the researcher tried to face this challenge by the areas this study has covered. Additionally, this research was conducted in one region of Nigeria and among selected universities and selected schools, thereby limiting the research in scope due to time factor, knowledge of the subject matter and acceptance/availability of universities. The researcher therefore puts forward recommendations for future research to reduce the limitation and for further development of knowledge and contributions.

7.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has identified some issues regarding organisational learning from data analysis and these issues go beyond the scope of this study, which could be considered by further studies. For example, there is a discussion on the issue of ascertaining if the use of OLMs can be universal despite differences in learning processes. It is also relevant to focus on the definition of OLMs in organisations. To this end, this study recommends further studies on OLMs utilizing different organisational learning process or framework to ascertain the role of OLMs in facilitating OL.

Secondly, universities studied like other organisations are situated in environments that influence how learning occurs across different levels at varying degrees. Examining the effects of internal and external environments can reveal the relationship between

institutional theory and organisational learning, while providing insight on the dynamics of organisational learning.

A further issue that has been noted from this study is how the age or establishment of organisations affects their learning. While this research has paid attention to learning as a social process shaped by surrounding elements, attending to the history/age of organisations would improve understanding on why certain organisations learn the way they do, the mechanisms they utilize and why certain elements shape their learning. This could be achieved through a prolonged period spent in studying the history of organisations, the period of their establishment in order to understand what was in practice and how it has changed or is being reflected currently in their learning process or activities.

7.6 CONCLUSION

This research has attempted to contribute to the efforts of other scholars on how best to understand OL, study it and offer explanations to those in practice on how to improve learning in their organisation. This research has investigated the process of organisational learning by focusing on OLMs facilitating learning and elements shaping OL in selected universities in Nigeria. It has also attempted to inquire empirically the approaches taken to these OLMs and elements in three case universities. Some OLMs have been found in these cases but have not been well covered in the literature. Others were identified to be covered by the literature and not operated in universities or operated uniquely by these universities to serve their purpose. This study acknowledges the fact that no one OLM serves organisations universally, rather organisations tend to adopt and use appropriate systems/structures/resources, foster communication and information flow and follow the rhythm- as learning flows (Ellis 2003; Graham 2008; Kar-Unluoglu & Easterby-Smith 2011; Lipshitz et al 2007; Popper and Lipshitz 2000). This study has revealed that organisational learning and institutional theory move along the same path, yet different in scope. By practice/reality they are interwoven, unless organisations are conscious of the elements (institutions) they form or are situated in order to guide their behaviour, learning becomes tempered with. A sound understanding of how organisations operate and relate with their environment however comes about through learning, which helps them define what

learning elements (institutions) are. OL and institutional theory can be considered as co-equal that should not be separated because they share the relevance for organisational life.

Looking at the lives of universities in Nigeria, it is visible to identify trends of elements shaping their learning, which they in turn device ways of learning, understanding and working round these elements to suit them. "Management" is sure the ultimate word that relates OL and institutions (learning elements). It is believed that the ability of organisations to not only learn but manage their learning is necessary in today's workplace. But it is often argued that organisations like universities are only responsible for and manage the learning of others, but on the contrary they learn organisationally, though they can be quite slow to learn as compared to other organisations because of their unique set-up and reception which also presents benefits to their learning. Additionally, universities are segmented as organisations that do not learn well because they are considered as an outcome of OL-learning organisations- rather than considering their process, as learning is a continual process. In comparing universities learning with other organisations, it is important to take note of their unique features, thereby comparing like with like. This research ushers in the comparison by looking into three different types of universities, where it was identified that understanding the OL process, use of mechanisms by these universities has been determined to a large extent by the existence (age) of the university and the level of Government control. Although this is not the aim of the research but it will be useful to suggest that further research could be conducted on the role or relationship between age and learning in organisations. Also further studies into these research concepts can be replicated in other developing contexts for comparison and research reliability.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

INVITATION LETTER

Researcher: Dakyen Christabel Chigeorlat
PhD Student,
Salford Business School,
University of Salford,
Greater Manchester,
United Kingdom.
M5 4WT

Dear Sir/ Madam

An invitation to take part in the organisational learning research

I am a PhD student at Salford Business School, University of Salford (United Kingdom).

The title of my research is **Investigating Organisational Learning Mechanisms (OLMs) and elements shaping organisational learning in selected universities in Nigeria.**

The main objective of carrying out this research is: - To investigate organisational learning in the context of a developing country, specifically in universities in Nigeria, with the aim of identifying and analysing organisational learning mechanisms, environmental and organisational elements shaping the learning in these organisations. This research will cover three case studies, based on the classification of universities in Nigeria.

This study will gather views of registrars, line managers/HODs, registry academic staff, students in all case studies. This research will examine member's perception on 'organisational learning', learning mechanisms and elements shaping OL in universities.

- The interview will take approximately 60 to 90 minutes.
- Participation is completely voluntary.
- Participants are free to withdraw their consent at any time.
- Information and data obtained will be analysed by the researcher solely for the purpose of this study, and will not affect any participant anyhow.
- The researcher will tape record each interview, with the participant's permission. The researcher will make detailed notes during each interview and use the tape recordings to check the accuracy of the transcribed interview notes. During the research process, any material collected will be kept in the strictest confidence and in a secure place.
- The typed record of each interview will be sent to the participant to verify that it is an accurate record of the interview

- After data analysis, all the (tapes, drafts) will be destroyed to prevent any misuse.
- The final written thesis will ensure anonymity by not using any actual names or identifying characteristics of any participant.

Thanks in advance for taking part in this research

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact:

Dr. Sudi Sharifi
University of Salford
Salford
Greater Manchester
M5 4WT
Email: s.sharifi@salford.ac.uk
Tel: (+44) (0) 1612955092

Dakye Christabel C
Mobile phone: (+44) (0) 7587861746
Email: c.c.dakye@edu.salford.ac.uk

Please indicate approval for your participation in the study by deleting as applicable.
I wish/ I do not wish to participate in the study titled: Investigating Organisational Learning Mechanisms (OLMs) and elements shaping organisational learning in selected universities in Nigeria.
Signature: -----

APPENDIX 2

INFORMATION SHEET

Researcher: Dakyen Christabel Chigeorlat
PhD Student,
Salford Business School,
University of Salford,
Greater Manchester,
United Kingdom.
M5 4WT
Email: c.c.dakyen@edu.salford.ac.uk

Research Title: Investigating Organisational Learning Mechanisms (OLMs) and elements shaping organisational learning in selected universities in Nigeria.

Outline of Research: The main objective of carrying out this research is: - To investigate organisational learning in the context of a developing country, specifically in universities in Nigeria, with the aim of identifying and analysing organisational learning mechanisms, environmental and organisational elements shaping the learning in these organisations. This research will cover three case studies, based on the classification of universities in Nigeria.

This study will gather views of registrars, line managers/HODs, registry academic staff, students in all case studies. This research will examine member's perception on 'organisational learning', learning mechanisms and elements shaping OL in universities.

All collected data will be treated confidentially and any reference to any participant will be made anonymous. A copy of the final thesis will be presented to the selected universities if required.

Any queries relating to this research should be addressed to:

Dr. Sudi Sharifi
University of Salford
Salford
Greater Manchester
M5 4WT
Email: s.sharifi@salford.ac.uk
Tel: (+44) (0) 1612955092

APPENDIX 3

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I have been recruited to participate in a research study conducted by Miss Christabel Chigeorlat Dakyen from Salford Business School, Greater Manchester, United Kingdom titled: **Investigating Organisational Learning Mechanisms (OLMs) and elements shaping organisational learning in selected universities in Nigeria.**

1. I understand that the study expects me to share my views and experiences on issues relating to Organisational Learning (OL) in universities in Nigeria.
2. I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time from participating in this research study without giving any reason. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation.
3. I understand that if during the course of the interview I begin to feel uncomfortable, I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview.
4. The interview session will last approximately 60-90 minutes. I understand that the interviews will be audio taped and that if I don't want to be taped, I will have to withdraw from the study.
5. I do understand that any comments / inputs I make during the course of the study will be treated with strict confidentiality by the researcher.
6. I understand that this research study does not have any known risks or discomforts associated with it.
7. I understand that all data revealing my personal identity and contributions to this research will be protected and anonymised and in no condition will the registrar/senior staff have access to information provided by me and other employees.
8. I understand that once the approval to approach employees has been gained by the present researcher, all data collected will be treated as strictly confidential and in no condition will the identity of the participant be revealed. I have been given a copy of this consent form

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX 4 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

I – Demographic Information

1. University.....
2. Name.....
3. Position.....
4. Years in this position..... previous position in this university.....
5. Total years of experience.....

II – Interview Questions

SR	QUESTION	TOPIC
1	How do you define organisational learning? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • And why is that? 	General understanding of individual view on OL
2	What does organisational learning mean to your institution? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the university engage in organisational learning? • What do you think of the whole idea? • Why is it done this way? • How does it contribute to the university? • Does it impact the university or economy? How? 	Understanding of OL in the university settings.
3	How do you and the university keep updated on issues? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is it done this way? • How are employees encouraged to acquire information? • Do you face problems in doing this? What are they? • Are there tools or strategies in place for acquiring information? Can you tell me about them? 	Information acquisition
4	How do you and the university share relevant information or experiences? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What support is available to employees who do commit to distributing information? • How are employees encouraged to disseminate information within the organisation? • How can, and do, employees raise any issues from their perspective and implement solutions with regards to information sharing within this organisation? 	Information distribution

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the organisation motivate employees to share and create knowledge? 	
5	<p>How does the university make sense of shared information?? Why so? By whom?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What facilitates this? Are there structures or processes for such? To what extent is there coherence between the organisational goals and individual interpretation of information? 	Information interpretation
6	<p>How is the organisational knowledge updated? Why is that? What promotes the practice?</p>	Organisational memory
7	<p>Are there organisational mechanisms that encourage organisational learning in this institution? How do they come about?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why do you use these mechanisms? What is the cost implication of implementing or using them? 	Organisational learning mechanisms
8	<p>How would you describe organisational learning influences/ elements shaping OL in your organisation? Why so?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you tell me about the OL influences in you're the university? How do these influences/ element shape learning in your university? How? 	Regulative, Normative and Cognitive-cultural elements
9	Any other contribution?	General

Thank you for your time and contribution.....

APPENDIX 5

DATA CODING AND REPRESENTATION

data coding and representation for OLMs

Themes	Sub-themes	Reasons for use	Institution and implementation of OLMs
Integrated	system structure, Meetings, conferences, in-house seminars and presentations, debate sessions, Committee system, classroom, workshops, seminars, union forum, pally, town hall meeting, class participation, Faculty and departmental workshops, communication pattern	Organisational principles, transparency, facilitate learning, long-lived culture, accessibility, circumstances, conveniences, melange, collaboration, simplicity, promotes learning.	<p><i>The institution and operation of OLMs are the function of schools, management, administration, system responsibility and also based on heritage depending on university.</i></p> <p><i>The cost associated with the use and implementation includes: resources, time, commitment and collectivism.</i></p>
Non-integrated	university network, conferences, in-house seminars, inter university conferences, Committee system, ICT unit, research and publications, consulting staff		
Dual-purpose	system structure, Meetings, conferences, Committee system, classroom, class, communication pattern Faculty and departmental workshops participation		
designated	Town hall meetings, inter university conferences, Committee system, union forum, pally,		
Support & mediation	university repository-portal and website, email, database, discourse zone, Mini- guidance handbook, directional posters and presentations, mind maps, external party, publications, electronic data interchange departmental journals, E-		

	library, Publications, memo, circulars, public relation, roundtable, retreats, website, electronic filing Cliques, text messages and personal mails, links, colleague gossip ground, journals research publications, manual filing, the school portal, electric and solar boards, filing systems Online forum, feedback boxes, report cards		
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Data coding and representation for Elements shaping OL

<u>Themes</u>	<u>Sub-themes</u>	<u>Reflection</u>
<u>Regulative</u>	Funding, union effects, government interference, External stakeholders, NUC , board members	<i>Shapes learning in universities both ways- by limiting and promoting.</i>
<u>Normative</u>	union effects, memorandum of understanding with other universities- local and international, autonomy of operation, cooperation, competition,	<i>Reflected majorly as elements enhancing/promoting learning unless union effects.</i>
<u>Cognitive Cultural</u>	Religion, university age, orientation and beliefs, personal and system traits, gender-orientation	<i>Reflected majorly as elements limiting learning in universities.</i>
<u>Organisational structure</u>	Organogram, unclear structure, misinterpretation in communication by second or third party, Bureaucracy, command structure, structures, system activities,	<i>both limits and fosters learning</i>

	University operations, management	
<u>Organisational culture</u>	available forum, university environment, Capacity building, system integration, organisational concern, limited infrastructure, Leadership, system traits, organisational mission, grievance channels, University operations, training, management, appraisal, Promotion, system consultation;	<i>both limits and fosters learning</i>
<u>Learning strategy</u>	learning styles, Capacity building, Staff and student capacity building, Library, training	<i>both limits and fosters learning</i>
<u>Organisational resources</u>	staff commitment, students, Computing skills, technology, staff benefits, limited infrastructure; material and financial resources, Staff and student capacity building	<i>both limits and fosters learning in universities</i>
<u>Organisational politics</u>	Politics, Power control, inner caucus, preferential treatment, senate	<i>Majorly limiting organisational learning.</i>
<u>Locational elements</u>	Power supply, poverty level, economic conditions, location and environment of schools, boko haram,	<i>both fosters and limits learning depending on university</i>

Categorization of Elements Shaping Organisational learning in Case Universities

Institutions	Organisational learning	Relationship
Enabler elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government regulations • Trade Union actions/membership • Community service • Institutional autonomy 	These elements define how these universities learn (external) because

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation/competition • Culture • Historical links • Organisational culture • Organisational structure • Organisational resources • Organisational politics • Learning strategy • Location of universities • Performance appraisal 	they exert influences that are beyond the organisational level basically arising from directives and statutory forces or from norms and values acceptable by similar entities, or from traits uncontrollable by the organisation but deeply rooted in individuals' ways of life and existence. Considering the history of education and universities in Nigeria (Chapter two) it is evident that environmental elements guide their learning and use of mechanisms; from the existence of different forms of education, to changes in regime and policies as well as the role of unions. While organisational elements are internally established, reflecting their way of life and operation as it regards learning,) and also their means of responding to environmental elements.
Inhibitor elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government regulations • Trade Union actions/membership • Institutional autonomy • Culture • Religion • Organisational culture • Organisational structure • Organisational resources • Organisational politics • Learning strategy • Location of universities • State of the economy • Power supply • Security threats 	

APPENDIX 6

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION SAMPLE

CASE ALPHA

Question: What is your notion of organisational learning in the university?

Response: This relates to how the university itself is able to learn from the activities it carries out particularly with regards to student, staff relationship (the relationship between the student, staff and the university management-its different component parts) and the output of its input.

Response: OL to me means looking at the organisation generally, what it has to offer to me as an individual and to the organisation itself in terms of the objectives of the organisation and how it affects me as an individual and then afterwards in what ways can I help the organisation achieve its objectives of establishment of that organisation and after such critical consideration I look at how I as a staff need some trainings or capacity building to enable me achieve the organisational objectives. If I need training then the organisation needs to address that issue of my capacity building as an individual to help the organisation achieve its own objectives. I also work with other people I would not be trained alone my capacity building has to go along with those of other staff of the organisation because we are looking at the organisation as an entity and in a university where we train students we look at ways in which we can help them achieve their own objectives as well as those of the university-which is the training of young minds to attain university degrees-. Therefore the university gets to achieve its objectives through the students and the staff through trainings, development, fundamental and capacity building.

Response: This means the lessons the organisation acquires over a period of time in order to provide services to the society.

Response: I just see it as what the organisation imbibes, absorbs and adapts itself to in order to improve.

Response: OL to me it's an in-house learning exercise that takes place largely as a result of the work that is done, the experiences, the knowledge that is generated and not just the knowledge but information about the inner workings of a system and that means the operations of the system involving the people involve, the work that is done and the information that is there.

Response: organisations are made up of people as far as I am concerned OL is the collective behaviour, performances of the individual members of the university that makes the university what it is. Some may learn on their own (self-sponsored) others might be sponsored by the university. For example here young lecturers who are recruited as graduate assistants are trained by the university- the university sponsors

them to go for higher degrees and some are permitted to go study leave which the university is responsible for apart from that individuals try to improve themselves in one way or the other by attending workshops, participating in conferences and things like that. So it the totality of all these that makes for learning in the university/organisation.

Response: OL means the ability of an organisation to create a culture that store and keeps information for future use where people can always fall back to the pattern set to run the organisation continuously.

Response: OL means a situation where an organisation is able to tap information, retain quality information and enables participants or people in the organisation to use the information. OL is all about getting people to learn and understand the way the organisation works and of course also what the organisation wants them to learn so learning is a function of what information is made available and is also the function of how the organisation has been able to get people to interpret and apply the information. You know in every organisation there information overload now so it now depends on the organisation to filter and know what is needed, how it is need, where it is needed and how people in the organisation would handle the information.

Response: OL in the university setting involves people coming with the interest of acquiring knowledge or research. These people are coming in as a group of screened individuals who are accommodated and trained by qualified staff in the university.

Response: OL is a process whereby the people in the organisation interact using a process and the process maybe driven by equipment/machines and even other forces within the environment can also contribute to achieve the goals of the organisation.

Response: for OL is a compound word there is organisational and there is learning so it is about sharing and exchanging knowledge, sharing experiences whether it within or without the organisation and applying knowledge/information (both new and old) and the entire essence is to advance entire the processes of the organisation the entire focus is to have the organisation move forward and achieve the set aims and objectives, mission and vision of the organisation.

Response: my understanding of OL from the basics means that organisations learn from experience, from the operations of their system in such a way that their performance and efficiency will be improved. So when you talking about OL in an academic institution like ours I am thinking of a situation where the university learns from its operations, takes on stock of what is going on what is going on that needs to be upheld and what is not working well that needs to be reworked.

Response: OL is all about the relationship that exists between the teaching and non-teaching staffs in an institution in the process of learning because the utmost goal of university is learning and knowledge acquisition.

Response: OL is how a leader can utilise its personnel in getting information and disseminating information and the acquisition of information in the organisation depends on the mechanism in use because information is considered the life wire of every organisation and without proper information everything will collapse and such information must be clean and clear in order to avoid ambiguity.

Response: As an educationist my understanding of OL traditionally is that it is learning that takes place within the context of the provision of learning institutional systems where individuals learn from the context of a two way system that is the individual learning from the system and the system learning from the individual as well.

Response: by the concept of OL I think it is very broad and its relation to my position in the university it depends on how we relate with it in like this institution we have many faculties and departments and three campuses so we relate on daily basis receiving mails and transferring information from one component to another.

Question: How is this practiced/done (OL) in your university?

R: For every new idea/information to be absorbed into the system there is a division responsible for that. This division proposes learning activities through the drafting of proposals on the distinct matters (defining the aims, strategies for achieving it and the possible outcome) which might be of effect to the students or the staffs through to what is called "the curriculum committee" which is the senate-the highest governing/decision body (academic) in the university. The senate looks at the proposal in terms of the school requirements, needs and availability of resources/capacity to fulfil the needs. There are processes actually that are followed which are partly administered by the NUC whereas others are internally developed which could be rigid but at times are made receptive to changes. But currently I don't think anything is wrong with the current system because it allows inputs from different spectrum of the university. But if it is a directive from NUC, universities have no choice in the matter they comply because NUC is seen as the regulatory body for universities in Nigeria. What the university has to do is to get a way of adapting to the new change. So for the university to learn it has to understand whether the need for change is a directive, an advice or a suggestion. If it's a directive the university has no option but to implement the change, if it is an advice or a suggestion then the university can look at it in order to decide how best it can apply the situation.

R: when I talk of OL in this university I talk of information because there is no learning without information- information is very important and nothing can be done without information. For instance, we operate the semester system staffs need to know when the semester starts and ends, what are those things expected to be done by staff within a particular semester. For example if a semester starts in January and ends in June what are staff expected to do within that period to help achieve the objectives of the

organisation. Staffs need to lecture the students, when and how to carry out the lectures so staffs need such information from the university. And in the process of lecture delivery disabled persons should be given due attention. Information on all these needs is required for learning to be made conducive in the university. Also on the path of students feedbacks are received, expectations are discussed for better path direction and enablement of their objectives. Information must be bottom up and top down in order for cross flow to exist-both vertically and horizontally. Also once information affecting the whole system crops up it has to be passed through the ICT who then distributes the information to the system through the server-the internet (email).

R: in this university the reflection on past experiences is in practice whereby the university looks at what has been done in the past like the management of the university and the students in order to improve and it varies with administrations so there is no stereotyped way of learning in the system. This basically starts from the head of the institution-the VC to the departmental heads and so on and so forth.

R: this has to do with individual leadership traits, the characteristics of the leader in question because we have now is different from what we had in subsisted previous regimes so with this new one the organisation is more open allowing outside influence, information and even the way things are done allowing people get information about their wards so I think that it is because they have learnt and the only way to enhance their quality standard will be to allow that kind of outside check- other stakeholders come into the system.

R: looking at the university there are different components OL is practiced differently in the university basically I may say in some cases in an informal or unstructured manner this is because of the peculiarity of the system in the developing countries and sometimes if there is a modality that is followed for that at times we lack the discipline to follow strictly adhere to the format of the practice. But I know as an institution lets be very specific an institution that deals with learning itself I think learning is a primary responsibility the issue might be what are we learning, at what stage and for what? But for organisations there are processes involved in terms of the orientation that is giving to the members of the university community as an organisation-the various units that make up the university- we have the management, the staff (both academic and non-academic), the students which are very important components of the system. Now learning takes place at different levels as I have specified. If you are talking about learning that involves the staff yes there are programs that the management which is of course the main body responsible for managing everything in the system, there are orientation programs, staff development capacity programs that staff are sent to and then there are some in-house. Yes information is generated sometimes top down or bottom up but most times easier done through informal structures. The learning in the system of a university and particularly this university has different ways it can go about its learning method. One as I said you must not forget that it is a learning institution and so every member of the system is engage in some form of learning so either the learning

that individuals go through and they bring it to bare in whatsoever area of responsibility that they have been assigned or the learning that the institution as a corporate organisation it finds itself undergoing. The various stages that are involved as far as our own system is concern I think perhaps I would like to reduce it to my own experience and maybe my own department too. As a department, the department has objectives, it has goals and whatever the department does is geared towards realising those goals and objectives and whatsoever learning that is to be measure in the department is usually based on the defined goals and the mandate of the department that has being assigned by the university or the statutory law that established the department so I think that one of the stages involved in the learning process here sometimes either at the staff or student levels; at the level of the staff once you find yourself in this system recruited to work and I think the learning both for you and the system starts so once you find yourself in the system that is like the starting point for you but even before you are recruited of course there is a preliminary stage that the system finds out whatever it wants for example if it is recruitment certainly they look for information about who to recruit, what the person should possess this is not the kind of knowledge that will begin from the staff itself it could be from other sources. In such cases the system learns there are modalities that are established you want to bring in people to come and join the system you must define what you want, what is the criteria, who meets it and above all the needs of the society because at the end of the day what is expected is that the system is expected to serve or to service the society, the need to solve societal problems. So for an organisation and a department like ours if you are recruiting it is a point of learning in the sense that you must define, identify, and look for what are the needs on ground, what is the relevance of the process and so on for me that is a learning stage. After the recruitment and people are absorbed into the system that provides another opportunity now the learning can be both ways and remember that even the person being recruited too has certain expectations and knowledge of what he is going into. At this point the learning is mutual- like a give and take thing. The system then begins to learn from whatsoever knowledge, experience or skills the person has and it adds to the knowledge bank of the new individual and he too gains because as he comes he finds himself in another phase of learning so for me this is another learning stage. Afterwards in the system itself there are other stages of learning that takes still takes place like I have identified that the process of recruitment provides an opportunity for the university to learn. The university also finds itself carrying out learning through the contribution of regulatory bodies such as the NUC who provides certain input into the system and in turn the university reflects such learning by the output it generates. The NUC is the highest regulatory body when it comes to education in Nigeria and they make a lot of input (contributions) they make standards that guides the activities of the university. And I think it remains the major learning point for universities because if it must survive it must by the standards laid by NUC.

R: like I have said the junior staffs are allowed to for higher degrees sponsored by the university. Two others are sponsored to conferences both within and outside the

country, then workshops are regularly organised either at faculty or departmental levels within the university.

R: There are stages we actually we follow or rather I would say there are guides- these guides actually vary based on units and the guides are not exhaustive that's the only problem because a lot of things change and the guides are changed or updated in very slow paste as compared to the day to day changes that we are observing in the university. In previous time I have been in postgraduate school and the things that have been happening even though policy has made or created a lot of changes you find that policies change and affect a lot of activities in the various units. For example in the school of postgraduate studies the policy that came up sometime last year was on PhD students having to finish their thesis as at when due and the policy made sure that those who would not finish within the stipulated time are withdrawn. That brought about a lot of changes in the way things are being processed in the school of postgraduate studies for instance when you bring a thesis in time past the scrutiny was more done administratively but right now the schools sees the need to bring in two deputy deans one for the humanities and the other for sciences just so that they can check the technical details of those thesis before they are forwarded and to ensure quality standard. Now people are getting more stringent and lot more are being turnout in terms of a PhD.

R: every organisation evolves over time of course you start with like in strategic management you will have your mission/vision when you have that the next thing is we say you should have your goals from your goals you must have your objectives and then your strategies- how do you get people to understand and achieve the goals it's all about the communication with people in the organisation. Underlying it as I said is the value and culture in the organisation and all these are the functions of information that is available. It starts from information from the beginning you must have your values, vision/mission and you must be able to put it in a way that everybody understands.

R: This organisation learns in several ways. For instance we have a department responsible for staff training and development and staffs are given the opportunities to get acquainted with universities in other states/ developed countries to study and when they return they run seminars for staffs in order to disseminate the acquired knowledge across the system or in the process of lecture delivery. They therefore pass their knowledge back to the society (what they have obtained from the society).

R: We have three levels of management in this university (top, middle and lower level) and it is the role of the top management and also the government to set policies, guidelines and learning standards for the system. Looking at my level the lower level- we are the operational level and we ensure that the learning goals and standards that have been set for the organisation are implemented. There is no way an organisation can work without guidelines or directions and there no way any goal or guideline can be implemented or followed without the people and even as we are carrying out these

guidelines there issues that might arise which will result to amendments at different levels in order to attain desired results.

R: the university itself is meant to be an organisation of learning (that's its principal purpose) there are various indications to show that it is an organisation where people come to acquire different forms of knowledge and also to disseminate it at different levels; maybe at the undergraduate, postgraduate (for academics) while for non-academics while on the job they acquire some form of knowledge and disseminate to those who are newly recruited. Lectures, seminars, formal and informal interactions with academic colleagues are all part of the learning process and also learning from the non-academics particularly having to do with administrative matters so these are all indicators that learning occurs in this university. A lot of things come to play when we relate in the university for instance a student may be in one department but having electives or core courses in another department. In terms of staffs relationship we encounter staff exchanges across different departments/units to man the departments so we work hand in hand both with academic and non-academics our work is interwoven although certain conflicts crops up especially when different individuals oppose and try to get rid of things they feel are not needed in the system without much consideration and along the line you find out there is need for such. It all balls down to everyone having his responsibility and carrying out the responsibility matters because each component depends on another in this system so everyone is important.

R: the university generally learns from the individuals and groups in the system because people have opportunities to develop themselves, to go conferences both sponsored and non-sponsored by individuals, the university and different organisations so constantly members of the university are learning new things and getting exposed to new methodologies, new technologies and new ideas and when they return they share this with their colleagues, they share this with the system sometimes you need to write a report to the university about your experiences detailing suggestions about how the systems can be improved what you have learnt elsewhere in a number of cases the university has taken this up and has implemented some of these suggestions which has improved the capacity and the capability of the university as a whole.

Question: How does the university get updated on current relevant issues?

R: for instance following the security threat issues in the state which affects the university, the staff probably their ability to come to work, it affects the students too as many of them reside off campus and they will definitely have to come to school so therefore they have to device new means of coming to the university to attend lectures as well as staff. Due to such security threats most buildings are being barricaded against possible attacks. Students are no longer allowed to bring in their bags within the campuses. That is an effect of something happening outside the university.

R: for me as an academic staff I cannot approach the VC to talk about issues I have my HOD. I go through the HOD and discuss my concerns. This can either be done at meetings- we have departmental meetings, faculty meetings through those meetings we pass our information, inadequacies, limitations and that's going through the proper channel which is the HOD who then goes to the Dean and the Dean forwards the issues to the VC through the senate. So information flows both from top down and from bottom up. After following the appropriate channels, circulars are passed to the staff; minutes from the senate are translated. Also information is gotten from outside the university basically from other universities.

R: there are units there are departments in this university that are responsible for a lot of things. Some departments are in charge of students there is the information system which is tasks with the responsibility of getting all information, statistics with regards to student's performances. There is also the information unit that are relatedly doing similar things. So it varies with divisions and departments in this university.

R: one thing with organisations is that they have laid down rules when it comes to information processing and this university has that as well. In such case one has to look at both the formal and informal aspect of information processing so if informally we can interpret an information as it may suit us or as we think is better and if we are in agreement and we are able to at least talk to our superiors and maybe communicate when we have meetings at the departmental or the faculty level ok this what we think should be done and so on and then the superior processes if he thinks that it will boost the quality of our functions and everything then somehow it can become law or a change but then we are still bound by limits that determines the extend of our flexibility.

R: Through interactions with colleagues in other universities the university gets to know what is happening and this is done frequently. We visit other universities and interact. For instance late January I was in another university as an external examiner others come here as well. So what you observe in other universities you can encourage it to be introduced in own university and of course other sources include the news media, internet which are very helpful for sourcing information.

R: being an ICT driven university we have units that- that's their job. We have a unit (the office of research and development) they a lot of work in terms of getting information from the external environment. Of recent this particular unit has probably loaded the university with a lot of information than we can handle (imagine information overload). But we also have another unit- the advancement office- this office liaises more with the outside community to bring information into the system and that has being very efficient.

R: every organisation has its own channel of passing information across. This university has an organogram which explains the relationship between units and between departments and there are official lines of dissemination information or communicating

in this university. At the top of the organogram as you know if it's the administrative function we have the VC as the head and we have the various divisions, faculties and directorate. And each faculty you have departments all these various organs also have heads where you channel information through.

R: we acquire information through the ICT you know in Nigeria we are recognised as one of the best with ICT facilities even though we had a little problem which led to the burning down of our server but we are currently working on fixing it. Most of our information is first class because we google them it's online basically so our information is impeccable. We have the library as another way of getting information and information obtained there can also be found on manuscripts stored in CDs and are in use.

R: we are presently running a management information system and we have many sources of information. Information can be both internal and external. Internal sources include the academic office (concerning student's information), student affairs, and bursary because these are where information about students is mostly kept. Anything concerning the staff will come from senior/ junior staff establishment. So talking of external sources we look at other universities, NUC (is a policy house of the university), apart from other universities we look at special institutions (polytechnics, college of educations and so forth) for information.

R: we have open sources like the internet where staffs (both administrative and academic and students learn) that's an open access. We also have various channels like workshops (internal and external- international or local), though we have an office within the university that aids in providing relevant information to the system. Research is also another source of information because it could be translated into unique products/services. The world has gone beyond material resources to intellectual resources and people are translating knowledge to money it is sad to know that researches are done and people think it's for promotion alone. My understanding of new knowledge/information is to get it where ever you are getting it but to contextual it to suit your environment- to process it and make all the necessary adjustments-, and also translating this knowledge to practice.

R: At my own level I make use of internet facilities to get information I also consult with other colleagues and my own students which is very important and more important than with my colleagues and the internet.

R: if the need arises it was usually obtained through hard copies by the collation of internal sources of information which is then centrally stored or made available to everyone in the system but now information is obtained through the internet although the collation model still stands but now it is stored in a database or the data bank which is more reliable but it needs to be updated from time to time. The major source of our

information is the NUC (we get directives from them), federal ministry of education, other universities either by our students (during IT) or staffs, or also through research (staff/student exchange of discourse).

R: well the university has a university directorate of advancement and the directorate is saddled with the responsibility of pulling together relevant information about training, opportunities and disseminate it to other units of the university. Other organisations also send information directly to the university management which is then passed to the members of the university community through the university bulletin, at times through the university administrative structure (from VC down to staffs) so staffs are able to access this information and able to benefit from these opportunities. Information might also come directly to individuals from their contacts in different parts of the world.

R: depending on the kind of information, for the VC weekly meetings are held by the VC and his immediate subordinates (principal officers) and through those meetings information gets acquired with the help of the principal officers.

R: nowadays the world generally is a global world that we rely heavily on the social media, internet services whereby we have much information online (there is internet in the whole campus) on issues and we access it easily that is in terms of connectivity. Universities need to be universal you cannot take a Nigerian university as separate it should be seen as universal in nature and approach.

R: the most familiar source of official information is the circular (it is in operation a lot in this university because it can emanate from everywhere in the central administration and then forwarded to whomever it concerns and that person or persons makes copies and distributes if the need be) and this could be found in our "surface mails" more like the pigeonhole where we get to see information we need to be informed about either for action purposes or just to be informed. Sometimes meetings are held for consultations at different level (faculty, departmental or any unit) where information on the expectations of the university is delivered. At times when the information is specific to particular persons letters are sent across to those individuals. Staff development is relevant to the university because we teach students over the years and we handle different course so staffs should be developed and equipped so we attend conferences so that we are abreast with our colleagues on current issues and happenings, thematic concerns and specialisation so that our arguments are up to date and we are familiar with what is current.

Question: How is acquired information distributed in the system?

R: by way of memos when there are important stuffs the management feels the school should be aware of or learn from based on certain observations the university writes to the various divisions/departments in order to disseminate information.

R: we have conferences, departmental, faculty and senate meetings, and workshops within the university and of course on individual bases we share ideas and stuffs like that.

R: when you talk about information dissemination the registry unit has been so wonderful under the leadership of the current registrar. He is quite proactive and once a letter or information comes in the registrar ensures that it is transmitted through memos and the memos go down very fast it's quite an efficient system. For most of the senate members this information does not just go through the it is straight to their email addresses so once information comes all senate members are informed instantaneously through their email boxes and later on followed up through memos.

R: Some we convert them into books and some into hand-outs while some we burn them on CDs and we disseminate them to the students and some who want soft copies can easily download them from the university website (through a link). We write circulars sometimes we give them written documents to be able to simulate that information, sometimes we invite staffs for conferences/workshops and then information is passed across.

R: we have a department that is mainly responsible for information and publications and these is under the registry and the registrar is the chief officer in that department. Now most of the time they get this information to us and other times we get information and send it back to them so there are different sources of information and when the information is acquired it must be directed to the unit it is needed through the internet, memos, word of mouth or personal discussions, put notices on the bill boards, you can call for meetings so as to discuss there are a lot of means of disseminating information around the campus. Like the student you can pass information through the department of student's affairs or union or through their departmental/faculty associations.

R: this depends on the kind of information because not all information is to be distributed to every personnel of the university system but there are stakeholders who require/need the information but where everybody needs the information it is possibly for publicity purpose. But information gets distributed through the radio channel (station) of the university, we have the internal media also, we have about three print media- the memos, the university bulletin and the advancement magazine those are all channels most especially the memos newsletter it goes round, the publisher comes to my officer to drop my own copy so it's a community service medium.

R: I try to use the structures in my department and faculty to convey such information to other components. An example is the Ebola case which I called the department of health sciences and veterinary sciences and I noted the idea of them coming up with

pamphlets with collaboration of the university health services so that they can inform the public on how they can protect themselves from the Ebola scotch.

R: depending on the information for instance in the case of examination there is a software used by all departments in handling and sharing information concerning examination so because of the issue of approval hard copies are made and forwarded to the departmental/governing board and other levels for approval. Information is shared through the interaction in the centralised multi user studios/labs in the school it is a new development in the system.

R: the university has an official website so you can access information about certain things on the university, at the individual level you could email to send across information and occasionally we use memos too so there are varied ways we share information the social media is there too but that is quite restrictive based on individual perception.

R: information gets disseminated through the electric/solar sign boards round the campus so people get informed on the happenings through that medium and unlike before we are coming up as a developing nation but I am looking forward to a time when such will be experienced at the lower level like the faculty and departmental level so that people will be fully informed. Also we have the university bulletins, the faculty officers are also mediums for information dissemination in the university.

R: the university has so many processes and units for instance we have the public relation unit, public and information unit which are both centred with the dissemination of information from one point to the other so that information in the university is open. We also have series of meetings at each and every level and these are processes of avenues for passing information.

R: through seminars, local conferences and also the delivery of lectures we get information shared. Staff development is relevant to the university because we teach students over the years and we handle different course so staffs should be developed and equipped so we attend conferences so that we are abreast with our colleagues on current issues and happenings, thematic concerns and specialisation so that our arguments are up to date and we are familiar with what is current. We have a culture of organizing departmental seminars from time to time (for interaction, development of ideas and the building of inputs for service delivery) and also seminars are expected to be presented in pursuit of higher degrees (for instance a PhD student is expected to present three seminars before completing the degree). The engagement with the students also is a way of getting them to know certain things we have learnt. Also we get information on publications through emails.

Question: How does the university make sense of new updates?

R: its mostly an in-house thing what I mean by that is it is basically a committee interpretation but depending on the matter and so therefore consultations are made by the legit members of such committee but in situations whereby after the decision is taken and member of staff tender concerns then representatives are chosen by staff to err out their views in another meeting with the required committee so in that case individual-group interpretations are welcomed.

R: usually at the various units there are meetings, sectional heads also give out information to the subordinates and when such information is gotten they usually get people together depending on what the issue is and if it is very important workshops or seminars are organised for some selected people. If it is something new that evolves or that is not used to the system they get people oriented to it and they organise workshops but most of it is that if there are things that are straight forward and easy department meetings are organised to give the information and the instruction for compliance.

R: it depends on what type of information for example you come about some newly published books in your discipline you bring and share with colleagues and get to discuss the content if possible for different helpful contributions or views. Other interpretations arise maybe as instruments that are used in teaching aids (in the communication between students and the staff).

R: actually the administrators of this university have been going through massive trainings and re-trainings that has helped them credibly in the area of conveying information. The information sent across usually is never ambiguous so you find that what is said is clear sometimes they are even advised to give a converse side of view to what they are saying so that the people will now be able to use the converse point of view to know clearly that this is what we are saying. It is always straight to the point, clear and specific with details and it is never ambiguous. People in this university interpret all information exactly how it is they don't miss it.

R: Information disseminated is written in a pretty self-explanatory language. For you to be employed into the university you have to attain a certain level of education and you are subjected to certain interviews for the university to know you possess required competence to be able to read and understand simple information and also your ability to write in simple language also. So the message is always straight.

R: well it depends on the nature of the information. There is information that you don't need to interpret you have to follow it- like a policy, like a command where there are some that when it comes we deliberate upon and contribute our quota or utter our concerns for better amendments.

R: The stakeholders of course, who are the stakeholders? Who are the researchers? Students because it's not just all about staffs it's about the students too. Who are the policy makers? The management and administrators, It's a systematic thing you follow

the right hierarchy and there has to be consultations either between two parties or more or other inputs from individuals (for instance you get the senate, the policy makers, fellows, the VC to meet and make decisions as a form of consultation) depending on the situation so you don't just move without consultation. It's a systematic thing you get everybody involved. We also make use of external parties more like specialists or analysts who come into the system in order to help the university make sense of certain situations or give the university alternative interpretations or views.

R: No the staff are not consulted on the security matters because usually only a part of the university management is responsible for such and it not something brought out for discussions. Usually a small group/click in charge meet and then decisions taken are announced and made known to the university system. There is no consultation per se. but on other matters for example if it has to do with improving programs or staff development usually there is a forum which is called the "congregation" which consists of all staff of the university usually when some decisions are taken by law the university management will be required to consult such bodies. Otherwise I know too the university chancellor wills enormous powers to be able to take decisions without consultations from anybody. Concerning academic matters the senate (consisting of all professors, departmental heads and deans) handles the decision making as well as certain affected staff are permitted to make inputs if it concerns them.

R: it doesn't permit a system interpretation ideally the university is supposed to be an institution where debate and discourse takes place over a period of time in order to reach a kind of general consensus as to the direction the university choses to follow but in reality if you look at the relationship between the management structure and other components as it comes to information processing it is very poor for instance if an international organisation sends us slots for the fellowship information does not get to those who actually need it so it hardly gets to the beneficiaries either on time or it never gets to them at all but I don't know if it is a deliberate management policy or carelessness on the part of some individuals along the channel of communication. So individuals don't have a say in interpretation it's just garbage in garbage out nobody wants to know whether you want to make an input they just send anything they want down they don't care.

R: it depends there are some cases where individual inputs are regarded especially when it has to do with personalised information like biometrics but there is departmental information where staffs of certain or all departments are expected to deliberate upon and report back their interpretation as a result of specialisation in those departments or at times departments come together as a syndicate to harmonise their stake on the information before reporting back to the highest level who then reviews before conclusions are draw based on a central syndicate before making a decision.

R: well it will depend on what the information is all about there is information that might require a system analysis and position so there is no ambiguity in terms of interpretation there might be issues maybe of ethical nature that the university community might be asked to have an input and express their position on such issue so it actually depends on the situation or information at hand certainly it is not every issue the system will throw up for discussion.

R: well in most cases the information distributed is clearly stated but when in doubt you can ask your next boss for clarification but it is hardly ambiguous so it is understood although once a while we face such unclear issues so people are free to ask questions through circulars or personal interaction with superiors for more elaborations.

R: the university normally calls for management whereby as an admin staff I am not allowed to discuss certain issues further but there are bulletins published every week with information that affects the whole system at large and it is open for contribution by all staffs either towards the university or its external environment or ideas. The essence of the university is not just to deal with its community but also the larger society because we are dealing with communities within and without so communication at the university is very open. In the presence of concerns people get to air their views at the meetings organised (either monthly or quarterly) to share issues that develop the system.

R: when you work in an institution because individuals differ when you allow individual interpretations there might be some ideas or interpretations that might wander away from the main focus so if there are clarifications that need to be processed or there are areas that we do not understand we can obtain official clarification of what is meant/intended so that we don't go in a futile direction of working in a wrong direction and later informed that is not what is expected of our own interpretation. Consultations do occur when meetings are met at different levels and also at the senate meeting because there are issues that need to be resolved that require multiplicity of ideas, variety of interpretations but the important thing is that there must be a consensus decision on how to go about it so in that regard many people will have different viewpoints of a matter but by the end of the day a commonly agreed viewpoint will have to emerge.

Question: How are issues kept for future references in the university?

R: There are two divisions in the university responsible for keeping records on what programs are approved and running: one is the academic planning and management which houses all records on staff, students ratio, programs, facilities that are available for each program in the university. Then there is the senate affairs division which is the

secretariat of the senate that is responsible for improving and approving new programs, awarding degrees, approving results and all academic matters. Also departments where new programs are cited will also document the progress of their programs.

R: information is kept by the registrar after the decisions are made known to the whole system. Also we have the ICT department they also store information that is appropriate to them for instance the students registration and the filled course forms. External information from other universities about sponsorship or other academic issues is stored both at departmental level, university level and the ICT directorate, information and protocol centre.

R: they are usually done in papers and are recorded, outcomes are always documented and not just given to people but given to people for implemented because anything implemented must always be documented and must always be kept in various departments depending on the information. For assessment purposes it is left for the management to actually review that new changes in the system are rightly implemented, although staff tend to comply with instructions passed across by the school.

R: most of the time our ICT unit are on their toes they keep updating things even the website is made to also conform to the updates. For instance there was a situation which led to the restricting of the university website as a result of updating both the university and the outside world on current occurrences. To be specific the new website monitors your studentship so that once you get to the lapse point of your studentship you can't operate as a student anymore and it deletes you until you reactivate your studentship. It's not a static website it is dynamic and all information is made clear. So updates are always carried out even new students have the privilege of knowing the changes happening in the university.

R: one would expect that if there are changes made to the system it should be communicated in memo form to the whole system (if it's a university-wide change). Once information is spread across the next task is to enforce and where there are deviations there are also consequences but it's like a mutual thing once the decision to change is there and communicated down then it's now the responsible of heads (either at faculty or departmental level) to ensure compliance with the newness in place. The first to ensuring compliance is to make sure everyone understands the requirement and because of the channel of communication that is already entrenched in the system such that members of different departments must ensure that they pass through the right channel to ensure adherence (so they are checks and balances to ensure compliance with change).

R: We have bunch of experts (people that are good in ICT) who type and upload/ update the new information on the university website and are recommended to all interested stakeholders and target audience after that written and typed information are documented and stored as archives in the library and other departments. Once new

staffs is employed for example during orientation relevant information related to the staff could be retrieved from storage and presented to the staff for easy assimilation and blend with the university.

R: we have to communicate first and that follows the management/ unit hierarchy after which there individuals who are responsible for keeping records that both affects our unit and those that affect the whole system. These are filed in cabinets; others are typed and stored in soft files, others in back up files like hard drives and USBs. And when such information is in need you have to formally follow the hierarchy to obtain permission for retrieval and use.

R: we have an open access in the university. Our ICT have an open access it is called "institutional repositories" where we can google up anywhere and get information like journal articles and also where we can upload or present our publications. In this university precisely we have open access on the repositories and such information can be published online using this institutional repositories. There are faculty journals as well and researches can be published in these journals as a storage facility. When it comes to information retrieval from the organisational memory the individual in need of the information is required to write to the heads of the institution (basically the VC and the registrar) who directs it to the specific department or unit/ faculty involved for processing of the information retrieval.

R: well it all depends on what is sent down if it is a directive a meeting where you are just directed we attend the meeting and listen just to get directed but if it is a for a where inputs are permitted and your input can bring about revolution on how things are done then minutes are kept and outcomes are sent to all faculties across all departments for consumption and documentation both electronically and paper based.

R: there are no more paper files we are going into electronic filing where documents are stored with the use of personnel pin codes though some of this things have limitations like the size and form of document matters but it is in use. It becomes a problem most times when it comes to implementation because decisions are made at committee levels and all members of staff cannot be members of all committee you know we are human and people tend to represent their own interest in most cases so decisions are taken by groups not everyone.

R: organisationally there is strong structure and you know to a large extent communication comes from top down but if there is information coming from bottom up that could improve efficiency of the system then the system is receptive to such ideas it does not through it out just like that.

R: things gums gradually so when something new is learnt people begin to ask questions on the whys but with time everybody must comply it's not by force but at least being a responsible and reasonable worker you have to comply because such new innovations are meant for the progress of the university.

R: we have so many ways of keeping information because it's an era of IT we use the internet, we use our computers we have everything at our beck and core all our information is there and we have files that is the hard copy so we normally operate through the hard and soft copies but at the university information is very open. At the university channel we have different decision channels such as the council, senate, congregation so once decisions are passed down people get to adapt although reactions are faced but on rare cases.

R: information is exchanged through the hierarchy of command in the university so it has to go through the proper channel so that documentations are fulfilled although certain information lies within a particular faculty where only such faculty and the management gets such documented and it's based on agreement that any change in the system is adopted. The university relies on publications as a medium for storage, we have the handbook as well for guides and references, also hard copies (minutes and decisions of meetings) and soft copies are kept.

Question: What facilitates learning in your university?

R: Continuing from the security angle, there is a chief security officer vested with responsibility of the university- he is directly under the VC and he reports to the VC-. When such issues crops up decisions are being made after which the public relations department gets to inform the whole university on the recent development. Sometimes circulars are issued; notices are placed to inform the university on issues of new changes that have occurred.

R: The use of fora, bulletins, memos, the circulars and also the congregation aids in facilitating learning in all parts of the university. These mechanisms are easily accessible because of the existence of relationships in the university because Africans belief so much in relationships and this goes a long way in curtailing certain barriers that might tend to show up when it comes to facilitating learning in universities.

R: The University sure has mechanisms which it uses to facilitate learning although some are static some are dynamic depending on the level or the department involved. For instance the ICT department who have the right to give out information can use mediums such as the university website, emails, text messages, and public relations-the radio channels- within the university.

R: Well as earlier said there is an information unit that is there to disseminate information to the departments and everybody including people who are not part of the

system, almost everything concerning information is done through the IT in fact it is a directorate.

R: we look at mechanisms of feedback and communication as a process and when you talk about a process of communication there is an idea that is initiate a communication contact and that initiator can therefore be the originator of a message he passes/composes a message which is passed through a channel of communication and communication goes through that process and comes back when there is feedback so when you talk about OL I will look at the feedback mechanisms that this university has in order to know whether its activities and communication are done smoothly or not. Some of the feedback mechanisms that exist at the moment are the formal and informal meetings of different organs/units of the university and there is a hierarchy or chain of command and that hierarchy is the same process through which communication is exchanged (from the governing council, the management, the senate and down to the lower staffs). The line managers and deans to a certain extent I will say are mediums for the feedback process. We are also in the media era where we operate through networks and telecommunication media where there are opportunities for people to interact personally online and also post comments and give feedbacks on happenings in the university. The formal structures of communication are there but also new media are emerging through which the university can learn about its operation and modify where necessary.

R: when I talk about knowledge acquisition mechanisms like publications, newspapers, bulletins, journals are in use in the university. Those that publish these bulletins have their own mechanisms for distribution but at least for staff we get a lot of this from time to time and for students too I think they've got their own means or mechanisms but depending on departments. Then we have our meetings too where we get information and so on. Memos are also used for organisational knowledge/information dissemination.

R: Administratively there are provisions and channels of communication both from top to bottom and then bottom upwards. One we must establish that in a system like this there are channels of communication and interaction as well and there are a lot of avenues of interaction this takes place either within staff, between staff and management, between the university and the outside world. So there a lot of avenues, there are programs for instance the internet is there, there are provisions the university has a website and I think various units of the university that handle various aspects and functions too that have websites through which communication, information is shared and through which opinions, views on issues are passed. Two when you go to departments there are workshop programs that are concern with the workings of the system they bring people together. There are meetings that usually take place between university staff and management or the tier that brings the university under one umbrella and they discuss and sometimes they get to know. People write also, people meet whosoever I mean if it the management if you have any concern and anything to

share. The avenues there are much formalised ones and informal ones that people can always explore and then the system too can explore to share whatever kind of information it has or if it wants to get individuals to get their own way or mechanisms/means of reaching out either to the system or even outside the system. In my department I employ the direct interaction mechanism with my colleagues and superiors (HOD). I participate in activities that the department is involved in so for me I don't have any limitation or restriction as to how I should reach out or to source for information. Like I said sometimes the informal mechanism is more effective than the formal because of a lot of considerations. For instance when we talk of technology yes technology is there it provides a very good platform but as I said the peculiarity of our situation how functional is it? Like we are here now the light can go off even the university website might go down or it's not functional at any time. So most times there are no specific mechanisms to say that this is very efficient and we have tried it and it's perfect so we deploy anything that will just work and to achieve the goal. When we talk about official transactions in the university there are defined routes of communication- from the department there is the faculty and then there are committees it depends on the issues or topic that is involved. So sometimes you have to follow through these channels to reach except it is necessary or you may have some "links" that fly pass all protocol and you find yourself there to pursue and get whatsoever information. If I need information from say academic records sometimes the protocol to be followed is so rigorous and at times it may not give the results. All I need is contacting my contact there (if I have any) telling him this is my need or concern. So the informal method appears more effective for us because of the inadequacies that are just around so there is no acceptable or very efficient means to way we can rely on 100%.

R: We run a committee system is it's a good means of information transformation I must say. Every unit has regular meetings (on monthly basis). The way information is disbursed could not have been efficient if not for the committees. And there are departmental representatives who are just to communicate them through memos and they would never meet up datelines so the information is usually dispersed at the points of meetings.

R: This university is basically is a committee system you don't take a decision on your own it has to be well discussed or defined its systematic so it's a system where decisions are taken at committee level for instance I am on the management committee and whatever information concerning matters on management are usually deliberated by we the members before any decision is taken and communicated and it is a collective decision. Learning is encouraged at the committee level because different people have their opinions so before decisions are made the superior opinion is what is taken as the decision on that matter that's how we sieve and get quality information and there must be a consensus among all members even among those that initially disagreed. So the decision becomes the general decision/ knowledge to be used in the system. The academic planning committee is the highest when it comes to decision on academic matters and it is headed by the VC but it still needs consultation of other committee

members before reaching a decision. It is quite an organised system but it I often toughened by bureaucracy. There are currently four major committees when it comes to research– the academic planning, committee of research fellow, the board, the management, while there are committees that are chaired by external parties like ministers and other government personnel.

Question: What factors influence OL in the university?

R: definitely there will be challenges because people are not easily amendable to changes. Just like with the issue of parking now you can't park within the varsinity of the university because of security threats, everyone is expected to park at a particular ground and everywhere is crowded. One effect of this is that the danger is being transferred to another location.

R: The university environment is more or less stratified that is certain rules exist for instance you have to do A to get to B and so forth. So for instance if an academic staff is writing a memo to the VC/staff you are expected to do that through the dean not directly from Mr A to the VC. Same as making a request, you follow the appropriate channels to get what you require. Informally people may give you information and this can influence learning because such source might not be authentic even if the information is true and such information can easily be disclaimed because where somebody who is not acting in official capacity gives you information it is not considered to be something you can hold them to. Also the composition of the senate matters a lot. Having too many members who are barely interested in the affairs of the school to a large extend affects how the organisation learns because they might stand as blockers or stakeholders who are difficult to change and also they limit the change process. And you know learning is change and change is learning as well.

R: you see for information we get them through emails or text messages from our departmental heads and what inhibits for instance the email as a channel is the problematic nature of the server which could be due to weather, power (light) or other unknown causes and once such situations occurs the flow of information is at a halt as no mail or updates will be received. External factors that demoralise OL in the university is the issue of hold up (traffic) which affects both staff and the student and at times lectures or forums are being cancelled because most members are stuck in traffic and unable to attend especially with the current problem or crises (like the bomb attacks) in the country so people hardly move out till a particular time where it is bright enough for everyone to see. What the university has worked so hard for is the proper monitoring and improvement of the server so that information can be obtained by both staff and the university itself. The university also works hard to ensure that in the absence of power supply enough diesels are provided for the generators to power the university during school period. Also the introduction of e-learning into the system is quite encouraging as the management trains e-fellows to apply and carry out e-learning

which is something not expected to be seen in most third world countries, this why this university is rated as one of the top university in the country. These are the efforts made by the university to ensure learning is promoted in the system.

R: for this university it is a segmented university not operating on one campus because of the challenges of resources so at times there is a lag when it comes to information passage due to the distance between the campuses. Sometimes mobility and the population itself in the university is overloaded because of the need for higher education virtually everybody wants to go for higher education, sometimes these are the hiccups. Little or no staff motivation affects the learning structure of the university as most staffs are overloaded with work, students and syllabus to cover. As Africans we relate a lot, we interrelate a lot so people don't keep things to themselves so once information is passed you notice that people talk a lot people are friends so before you information is being disseminated this however encourages learning.

R: bureaucracy like I said we have limits and then in the informal setting I think "clicks" so if there is a click things may move more within/between them than for an external party to the click this therefore hinders the flow of learning although it has its own potential benefits whereby members of a click tend to have access to information derived from diverse sources and this might be greater if the click exercises high influence in the university especially when it comes to standing for the right course. Status or maybe cadre also hinders because some people might decide to act or feel that it is a big people thing when it comes to certain learning and it should be better handled at their level and so other lower level staff tend to ignore and not to poke nose into their affairs. Informal organisation, friendship, incentives and the freedom to contribute which helps us grow and then we feel that innovative ideas are welcomed and can be adopted are certain factors that promote OL in this university.

R: A lot of factors one of them is the lack of basic infrastructure. This university operates multi campuses but you know what that means? It has not be able to find itself permanently in a very conducive environment to learn in order words virtually what is being done is on the temporary base so if you do not have a university located on its permanent site and that permanent site having all the basic infrastructure and the critical infrastructure that it requires to run you can imagine the problems it will run into so for us here it is one of the major problems. Structures are not even there people share offices some don't even have offices at all. Most this infrastructure problems are reduced to lack of funding. These two identified factors I think summarise and contain any other factor hindering learning. If the university has basic facilities and adequate funding (this funding is meant to achieve other targets) then I doubt it any bold factor can challenge the system. The security challenge I think might be another factor that is generally affecting the learning system and I think it is equally providing an avenue for the system to learn as well because the system overtime had to review its location and contain with certain security issues. Whenever there is outbreak of violence you remember the university has multi campuses (being balkanised) and doesn't help the

situation so it affects the learning process but also provides the university with a learning point to review, to think out everything about the university because the security situation challenges even the survival of the university a lot of students had to withdraw, the university application has dropped because of the same security threat no one will want to go the university that is not safe. The presence of motivation in terms of welfare (it is very important) gingers me to learn and also to achieve the organisational objectives because whatsoever we are doing here it is to achieve other objectives, to survive, to earn a living so with good welfare packages I am motivated to work. Just as I have highlighted some of the problems encountered with learning if they are addressed that will encourage learning. Within too if there is commitment, sincerity of purpose in how the system is managed in the part of those at the top it will certainly encourage learning. Where you say this and do the other it does not promote any learning.

R: To me lack of adequate facilities, lecture rooms are not enough students might not have a room or might be standing when taking lectures (congestion), laboratories are poorly equipped, and many students buy regents by themselves, medical students no longer do practical and many things like that. The university roads are bad, no relaxation spots for students. Few public address systems so in a large lecture most students don't get to hear what the lecturer is teaching so those are the problems. It depends on the administrator, the administration of the university- the management who decides things that's at the local. As far as our union is concern universities are not well funded by the federal government for example this is a federal university. Then when the funds come they are not well managed by the university administrators who decide the policies. The economy is a contributor to poor learning today for instance many don't feed well and as skyman said first of all man must eat and drink before pursuing art, religion and philosophy. When such is the case there is lack of concentration on the part of the learner. Others don't live well many are scattered in town because the university arbitrarily has increased the accommodation fee so many live far in town.

R: very sincerely on the limiting factor is funding ehmmmmmm several units are not well funded so you find that the materials and equipment for communication are not very accessible. For instance you find broken computers; there has been plea to have better internet services because at the moment the service is difficult to access. Machines such as the photocopiers and other small machines which should be there to make work and learning easy are no there and sometimes records are not properly kept due to such. Secondly we have the human factor and this honestly is more like cancer because its corruption. There's been so much fight on corruption in Nigeria but let's be honest corruption is a board member so you find people who seat in meetings are supposed to have the communications sent the right way will try to distort the information or even the learning process. You things that are meant to be going to some places not going there because of some individuals who are not able to get themselves straight; these are basically the factors that have been hindering learning in the university. I think the

major thing is the crop of people (human resources that we have). We have a number of highly emotional and intelligent people who are able to lead and that leadership has helped so much in the area of learning adequate record keeping facilitates learning in this university

R: you know in every organisation there are hitches/ bottlenecks when it comes to information flow- I am not aware of , I didn't get it are common excuses and that's a major barrier to learning. Also organisational learning should cover areas that everyone understands, it should be clear and visible and it should be such that you can monitor at well. The process of engaging in OL should address these issues especially putting what is learnt to practice. The university itself aids in learning in the sense that the institution properly integrates its staff into the system this in turn builds up their willingness to learn. So when integrated into a system it shouldn't be a big problem for to seek to know what you should or shouldn't do. The systems are there- there's a way of integrating people into the system when they come and that promotes learning and being an environment that itself is for learning is also a place where an average person is eager to learn.

R: no organisation can be 100% free from limitations, considering the nature of our county- a third world country- we have several constraints. The lack of steady power supply disrupts network services and this could also lead to hazards such as server burn down. So we are left with no option than to improvise other means of getting connection for instance through the use of modems which is another barrier (it's an expense on the staff or the student). We alternatively use letter dispatched method but certain hazards could stand as barriers also for example accidents could occur, nature could show itself-rain- at the cost of dispatching the mails. Besides these barriers nobody harasses another of information not properly disseminated. Also the use of circulars and other traditional modes offer us certain advantages because not all people are computer literate to use the computer and so that reduces certain complaints.

R: To me as an individual I will say "adaptation" is an influencer because changing/ coming from a different institution to this university- the policies/rules/guidelines are not the same with those of other institutions, so I have to adjust and follow this university pattern and the university also gets affected not just the individual because it is a kind of a symbiotic collaboration for things to work. You know the "Nigerian factor" there are a lot of challenges oooo. For instance individuals have information that they don't want to share (information hoarding) because they feel it will benefit others. Also implicating information can be released to the public to tarnish individual's integrity due to envy or malicious aims (and they do happen in the system). There is also information that will alter something in the system and once it gets to the system and things are altered it might affect certain people and causing more harm than good to the system. There is information that is supposed to build the system but because some people don't like the system they just keep the information to themselves so we are not liberal in giving information, while other information may be hidden for security

purposes. The problem of limited expression (polished information) also stands as a barrier because those in authority exercise certain powers so staffs are usually mindful of releasing certain kind of information that may portray the management as not doing well so as not to get into trouble. Also certain information is not expected to go beyond the system so it is usually presented selfishly and so certain strategies are used to be able to make the information not to pass beyond a particular boundary so these are some of the challenges we face. On a personal view I can say staff benefits (salary) motivate people to learn. Another thing is the issue of capacity building it encourages staff to put in their best efforts towards developing the system because without capacity building we won't have a system like this. Carrying out research especially in the academic field also encourages learning because it creates more exposure, develops relationship and gives room for interaction and intertwining with people of different calibre, interest, characters, ideas, opinions and it strengthens people to research widely on other similar areas. Some of the university unions also encourages learning by being examples to their members and offering assistance to staff members in terms of development and also packages. Machines (the laptops, desktops) provided to staffs by the university also encourage learning and makes things much easier.

R: A lot of barriers are available in the university when it comes to learning. Power supply is a bit steady but it's a major problem to learning. The human capacity to manage information is quite low because most staffs are reluctant towards gaining more information, morale and capacity is low staffs are basically working for the salary. Some staffs hardly appreciate others efforts when it comes to sharing information for instance we subscribe to journals abroad and once we send such information to academic staffs they hardly reply with a thank you this shows how non-challant they are and by that you can determine whether someone will use that information or not. People are also not thinking outside the box. One of the greatest problems in the university is that people don't go beyond the university or will I say they don't look beyond their nose for relevant information. There are raging problems from lack of infrastructure to difficulties in learning- like learning styles or personality issues. At times learning becomes difficult because of the make up or attitude of the personnel for instance some staffs done merit working here they just apply and get recruited here because they have no job offers elsewhere so they don't show passion for the work. When you love what you're doing you condition your mind to the changes and issues that might crop up in the system and you're willing to adapt any time. Academic curriculum are stale no revisiting or reflection by lecturers to improve the syllabus. Also there are religious issues (beliefs) that hinder the full exploration of women potentials in this university. As a university we are still standing because there are few people who are trying to get things done the right way, the right attitude so this encourages learning. Also the on the ongoing development of infrastructure at the moment is a hoping stand for most people, and then the research grants and capacity development funds we get also gives us reasons to carry out learning in the university.

R: information processing is one way sided it's a one way traffic not a two way thing it's just up down approach and where you have a person who is not well conversant with the system and he is meant to be in charge of disseminating information it could be very dangerous because he will use his own primitive subjective biases and assume what his doing is the right thing and by the time you try to draw his attention towards his wrong he might decide to use his executive fiat to harass, intimidate and suppress any dissenting voices which shouldn't be because the university is supposed to be an epitome of social freedom, a circularised environment where you can say what you want to say and do what you want to do is an experimental stage for the larger society but for now that stage has not been reached maybe another time it will be reached but for now it's just one sided it's just a zombie setup whereby you just tell people to go and do things are irrespective of the consequences. The presence of certain individuals in the system who strongly believe things will grow for the better so they try to do their job properly perhaps that is what is making the system still moving.

R: well at the individual level one is that you have to have what it takes to gather information now we are in a technological world people have to be computer literate that can be a constrain having people who are not necessarily literate if you have a computer at your finger nails it's like you have the world in your hands and you need the capacity and the internet to be able to do that a good broadband so you can stream, download information and find things easily so that can be a challenge because not all universities have the facilities to carry out such and we are in a less developed society where people have different priorities so for someone to invest and buy a laptop the person might not think it is very important to him and that can be a challenge too and even the ability to use when you have the internet positively to advantage because some use the net for less important things whereas you can use it to do more constructive work so that can be a challenge to the individual as well but in this university we have free internet in system the university pays for it and the capacity is good enough to access what you want. But generally times are very difficult and the system at times is not receptive to all kinds of ideas so it is not every suggestion that is accepted the system is bucked down by other considerations other than just your fancy ideas so that is a challenge too but by and large those are the major problems we have in the system. Well the mission of the university the university has a mission of being one of the best in world and to graduate quality students so that mission is always there to push the university towards doing what its mission expects and that in turn presents quite an open system where opportunities are created for both students and staffs and also staff development is encouraged and the university is also conversant with global trends it doesn't want to be left behind so it is very open to trends of other universities out there and the university is constantly working towards improving its feasibility both at local and international level by signing memorandum of understanding with foreign universities in the areas of research and corporation and it is also competitive to win research grants at the local and international level so these are some of the things that

encourages learning to occur in the system so that benefits could be derived from new ideas, technologies and things happening.

R: well there are little or no challenges to me because if information gained is clear and there are rooms for clarification when the need arises unless there are situations when the information is not clear and there is no one available to explain or clarify that I would say there is a potential barrier because there is a likelihood of wrong interpretation and implementation of whatever information received and you have to face the consequences. Documentations are made to help people acclimatise with the university especially new staffs and students and in case of fall-backs tomorrow so information is usually documented on both hard and soft files.

R: in some organisation information processing is very difficult, complicated and value losing whereby it's not easy to pass information and express your grievances but with what I am seeing in this university the reverse is the case things are moving fine we even have some units nowadays where grievances are discussed and channelled to

R: because of the long tradition of paper documentation sometimes when you want to refer to years earlier years documentation the papers might be lost and then now that we are in the computerised age though we are not fully computerised because there are also issues of lost electronic data by the virus or system failure and the one gets afraid of alteration and then the problem of not having everyone on the same page in terms of competence with the use of the computer (some are started or intermediate while others are experts) and that lags when it comes to information dissemination. Despite the challenges people are still willing to learn and hold on especially when they realise their missions and goals tallying with that of the institution (the principal vision of the university is the dissemination of knowledge and the conduct of research) so for someone to be here means that individual is ready to focus on achieving the university's goals so staffs are motivated when they remember they signed up for the pursuit of the university's goal in the best of their ability.

R: information processing in the university is quite complex because the university has special channels of disseminating and using information for instance for staffs we have the office of the university and the VC relates to the deans, directors, HODs, heads of sections and the rest. The VC usually operates through the deans and directors who pass down the information to the HODs and the rest and if the information concerns the university community there is always official university publication where information is passed across to the students and the whole community for their consumption and this is appreciated in the system because once there is any release people rush to keep abreast. While if the concern is about a faculty the dean then summons a faculty board meeting to tackle that while every month the senate holds its meeting where crucial issues and decisions about the university are made and if there are further deliberations this could be discussed at departmental levels where feedbacks are later sent back to the higher level for appropriate conclusion and decision.

R: as I have pointed out information processing at a certain stage (interpretation) is not fairly represented it is in most cases deliberated upon based on individual bias not the system's benefit and that hinders learning. Also the issue of promotion is a big deal because when one is due for promotion and the system fails to recognise and approves that it affects the system because the demotivating impact on the individual could be directly or indirectly injected into the system either through the students (that is the lecturer might give in less since he isn't recognised as required) or through his interaction with the system itself there will be little or no commitment and you know what that means- disaster- to the system.